

MAN

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Junior

OCTOBER, 1948

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MAN Junior

OCTOBER, 1948.

VOLUME XVII, No. 3.

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Published by E. C. Miller Publishing Company Inc., 1616
Young Street, Los Angeles, California. Entered as Second
Class Mail at Los Angeles Post Office. Postmaster: E. C. Miller • Editor:
W. G. Tracy • General Manager: Paul V. Morris • Associate Editor:
Albert J. Moore • Art Supervisor: Fred Mandes • Advertising
Sales Manager • Business Manager: Walter W. Charles • Production
John C. Mangan • Photo Department: George S. Spangler
Advertisement Sales Representative: Ruth C. Marshall, Leonard Mann
and Elizabeth B. McElroy • 200 Franklin St., Atlantic
City, New Jersey. 1909 West 1st St., Los Angeles, California.

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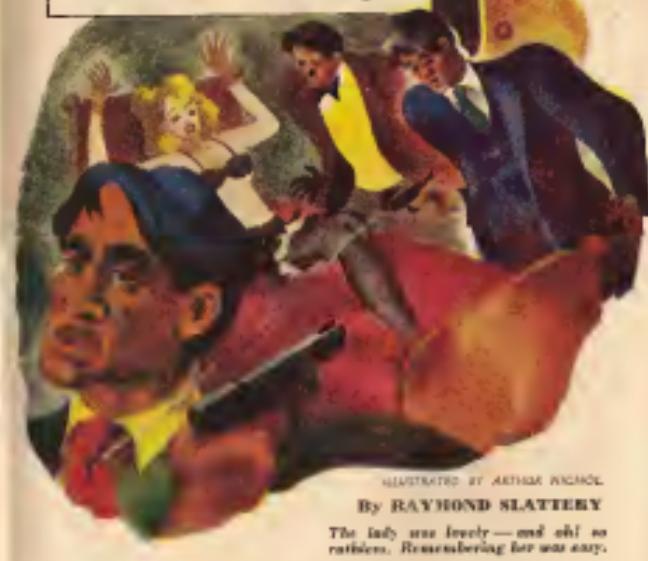
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Blonde Trap



ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR PICARD

By RAYMOND SLATTERY

The lady was lovely—and oh! so
naughty. Remembering her was easy,

I REMEMBERED the blonde from
the previous night. She was
wearing that vivid green suit again,
with the splash of brown at the
throat.

"Kahootie Mammotie, the Cross,"
she said, slumbering the rear door.

I pulled the bar and rolled Zip
House's motifs-trap.

"Would this be the same cab I rode
in last night?" the blonde said.

I said, "Would you ever forget a

ride in this old splinterbar?"

"Well—no," she said. "I was
rather hopped to strike the same cab.
Did you find my brief-case?"

"Brief-case?" I said politely. "No,
did you lose one?"

"Yes," she said.
"But you didn't leave my case in
that cab, lady."

I swung the criss and heaved up
William Street. She said, "Look,
ma'am, you'd be moving yourself

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some bother if you just handed that brief-case over."

I didn't say anything. What was the use? I pulled up outside the Keltmatics.

"Well, boss," my passenger said coldly. "I may want you again."

I watched her go up the steps and through the lighted doorway. In maybe five minutes she came out again. There was a man with her, a well-trained character who could have passed for leading man in a Coward play. They got in as the back seat, and I said, "Where to?"

"Just park outside," the handsome one said pleasantly. "I just want to talk."

"I know what you're going to say," I told him. "The lady lost her brief-case. Do I drive you anywhere?"

"All right," Seeler said. "I'll direct you as we go."

I parked the old bus through the crowd. We made a couple of turns, moving away from the lighted Cross. The character behind me said, "Turn left at the next street."

I was half-way along the side-street before I realized that it was a dead-end. There weren't many lights, and no people.

"Pull up," Seeler said.

I stopped on the broken. They grabbed in the off-side doors as usual, and my passengers were fixed in one side. I tried to jump out, but the faulty catch of my door was stuck. Then something exploded in my ear, and I jerked a surprised, sideways look at the blonde. The pistol in her hand was still smoking.

The man sat up and said, "You shouldn't have shot him, baby. Not here." My upper arm was numb, but red wrinkles were smoldering warmly over my hand. Almost suddenly, Seeler swung his fist, and the world ended in a blaze of Little lights . . .

It was dark, and my right arm was trembling. I looked down and saw that my pockets had been ransacked.

The only thing missing was my taxi license. I went looking for a police station. I found one, and who should be there chatting with the sergeant but my old pal Macintosh McElroy. "What's this?" the sergeant said. "Another robbery? How much did they take off you?"

"One taxi driver's license. They shot me to get it, believe it or not."

I told him all about the bother of the missing brief-case, and the detective began to show keen interest. "The girl," he hooks in eagerly. "Deserve her again."

"Blonde," I said. "Light green salt, brown hat and shoes. Kind of thin. No legs."

"Greta Norboe, confidential secretary to Mark Lawlor," McElroy said. "We've been looking for her all day. She was carrying place of some new oil country that Lawlor's experts had surveyed. She was due at Lawlor's office last night, but never turned up."

McElroy was thinking hard. He said, "Your private address is on your driver's license. Let's go."

It shows you what police training will do—I would never have thought of that. We piled into a police car, and I guided the driver in my room at Dartington. The room was a mess; my stuff strewn everywhere.

"They made a pretty thorough search," McElroy said. Then he narrowed his eyes and said the words from right up—"Did they find it?"

"What? You fool?" I roared. "I tell you I never saw that brief-case. I'm sure she had no brief-case on that first trip."

McElroy screwed up his eyes in thought. He said, "It's curious' Lawlor wants in his office for his secretary to write with the plans she'd brought from Britain. She doesn't turn up, but you say that you took her to the Keltmatics. Twenty-four hours later she boards your cab



"No, but suppose she represents the victory of the United Nations over the forces of evil and oppression...Then we could get away with it!"

again and claims she's just the person which would be in the brief-case. It doesn't make sense. Would a girl who was planning to double-cross her boss be careless enough to leave the very object of the deal?"

I was waiting on a oily rock last night, when Mulligan opened the door and led me to the next bench over. He said, "I want your whole story again, James. Tell me exactly what happened."

I didn't like the way he called me James instead of Jimmy. There was something wrong. I sighed, and told it all over again. When I finished, he said, "What happened, James? Was the brief-case too hot to hold?"

"What in blazes are you talking about?" I said.

"Mark Lenlow's been staying at a city hotel, waiting for his secretary to show up. Today, he went home to his house at Palm Beach. There was a letter waiting for him there. Inside it was a receipt for a briefcase which had been lodged at Central Station. Lenlow returned to town, redemanding the brief-case, and found the oil paints intact."

I stood at him, astonished. Then I said, "Well, that's that."

"Except for a couple of minor details," the detective said. "Firstly, the paints could have been copied. Secondly, Connie Norther is still missing. She disappeared forty-eight hours ago, and you're the only one who's seen her since. Or so you say."

"What are you suggesting?" I said.
"Be-long, Jimmy," Mulligan said blankly.

He fled from the cab and vanished into the crowd.

A large man wearing billy clothes and heavy eyebrows banded the cab and said, "Kalmekis Monsters, Karm's Choice."

At the Monarchs he said, "Come inside a minute. I've some luggage to pick up and I'll make it worth your

while to give me a hand with it."

We climbed the steps and went into the lobby. I expected we'd go up in the lift, but we walked right through to the rear of the building and out of it.

"Hey, what is that?" I said on the back steps. "Where're we going?"

"It's all right," the character said. "I only use the Kalmekis entrance for convenience. That way . . ."

I was stamping in a room under a bright light. There were a man and a woman were watching me. One man I didn't know, the other was Smiler and Buggy Clothes. The girl was the blonde who'd shot me, and she was still wearing the green suit.

"To resume where we left off," Smiler said pleasantly. "I want to know what you've done with my lady friend's brief-case."

"You're all crazy!" I cried nervously. "The damned oil paints are in the hands of the rightful owner. I never—"

"Who said anything about oil paints?" the third man snarled. "You never saw the brief-case, yet you know what was in it."

He hit me on the mouth. Then that trigger-happy blonde took her pistol somewhere under her skirt and very deliberately hit me on the right upper arm.

That did it! I unseamed, and savagely kicked the girl's legs from under her. She squealed and collapsed, dropping the gun andлагging her skin in agony. I freed the weapon, just beating Smiler to it. He landed on top of me, but when I dug the barrel hard in his side he couldn't scramble away quick enough.

I rolled and got to my feet. I covered them all with the pistol. I backed to one of the two doors, wanting only to get out of the place. Trust me to pick the wrong door!

I realized that I'd only backed into another room. I felt for the light



Still to come in three shots: Ah, Shirley and Alicebank!



switch and clicked it. There was a grunting, gurgling sound, and I swung round with the gun at the ready. Then I stared, and in that moment of surprise a lot of the pieces of fun and puzzle fell into place.

I took out my pocket-knife and dashed the par from her mouth. She was roped tightly to the bed. She was nothing but flabby undies and stockings. I cut her free, but it was a moment before she could move.

Then the door burst open. The first thing I knew was that Snaker had got a gun from somewhere. The bullet fanned by my neck, and I turned and fled before he could shoot again. He dropped his gun and sank groaning to the floor, clutching his shoulder.

The yellow-haired gal had got up from the bed now, and I said, "Pack up that gun, Currie, and open that cupboard door."

The girl obeyed. Waiting the two men, we herded the men into the side-hallway wardrobe and locked them in.

I went out and found the garrulous blonde still rubbing her braised ribs. I pushed her into the bedroom. I said, "Take off that suit and those shoes and give 'em back to Currie Norton."

She unbuttoned her eyes at me, but she stripped off, and Currie got into the suit. She looked beautiful, excepted and all that she was. I said, "Now be that baby to the bed, and make it good."

"It'll be a pleasure," Currie Norton said.

Later, waiting for the police she told me the whole story. She had gone to Brisbane, picked up the geologist's report and plans of prospective oil country surveyed in Northern Australia. She took a train

back to Sydney almost immediately. Normally, Lonlow would have had his car park her up at Central, but he was without a chauffeur at the moment. She intended taking a taxi to his office, but a city messenger passed her at the station with instructions to go straight to the Klemantos Mortuary as the original arrangements had been altered.

Currie knew that other parties were interested in finding oil deposits, and decided that it might be a trick to steal the plans. As Lonlow was working on the report and could deal with the plan later, she judged the best course action the report, at Central and posted the ticket to Lonlow's private address. That way, she thought, if her boss was at the Klemantos no harm would be done. She tried to check by phone, failed to note the office number, so took my cab to the Mortuary as instructed.

There the song had whistled her

out the back out and onto the building where we now were. Fearing they would kill her for out-smelling them, she had taken then that she'd left the brief-case in the cab.

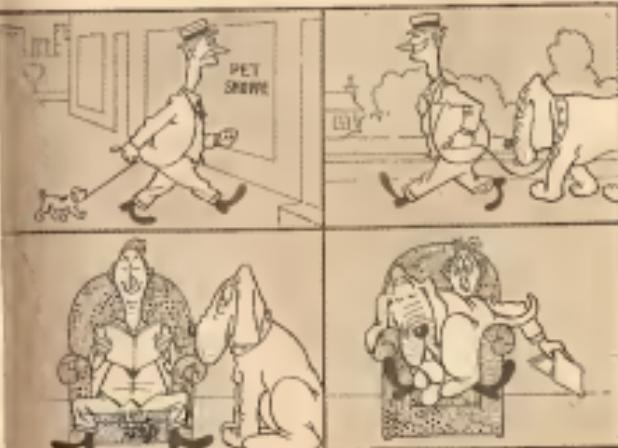
"Just to impress them," she said. "I deserved the cab—hated old things with pink waistbands and a pig-nosed driver. I'm sorry I caused you all that trouble . . . Jinxay."

"She fooled me completely," I said. "I remembered the green suit and the blonde hair. I thought I remembered the legs, but now that I've had an unobstructed view of both yours and hers I can't imagine how I was fooled."

She blushed, but seemed to like it. She said, "If you'd like a better job, my boss needs a chauffeur badly."

"Do you travel round with him much?" I said.

"Quite often," she replied.
"Consider me hired," I said.



Bad Men



It began when Coffrey's girl married another man; and it ended when two men were hanged.

COFFREY was in a bad mood all that day. Penn left him alone. Well, almost. They were both of them wild men, afraid of nothing, but they respected each other. Coffrey lay on his bunk, playing himself with vom, a Considering air of violence about him. Penn walked outside in the sun, and sat down with an old newspaper. Their favorite boat lay rusting in the cove, the nets were drying on the beach. It was a wasted day.

They lived on the Great Barrier Island, at the entrance to Hauraki Gulf, outside Auckland Harbour. Only a few hours distant from Auckland, it might well have been in the mid-Pacific; isolated, outport, blasted by terrific storms, a target for gales that swept its angry ramparts and set its giant forests to howling, galed by seething seas and filled with the bones of wrecked ships.

When Penn finally went inside, Coffrey was sitting on the bed, glowing, a wild fire in his eyes. "Listen, Harry, if you curl up and married another woman—just like that—what would you do? Man is man, wouldn't you do for 'em?"

Penn nodded. "She shouldn't have done that to you, Jack. But it's the old people's talk. They influenced her against you."

of the Great Barrier

He rolled back to his bunk, muttering threats and obscenities. Penn shored his amusement. Old Taylor and his wife had no right bearing into the affair between their eldest daughter and Coffrey.

What neither man realized was that the girl had felt an real love for Coffrey. It was purely infatuation, an infatuation that stemmed naturally from the repression created by her island existence. All three of old

Taylor's daughters were beautiful, but they were starved for fun, for amusement, for companionship. When the young fishermen first came to the island, the girls came down like sky signals to inspect them. Soon they were talking happily. Coffrey resolved then and there to have the eldest. Penn had his eye on Fannie, with the full breasts and pretty lips.

The parents and the only son did not take to the newcomers, and the

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL REED



girls were advised to have nothing to do with them. They apparently paid no attention. Then the oldest girl and Coffey became engaged. And now she was married to another. And it was the parents' fault. They had mismanaged the marriage to save the girl from the mistake they thought she was about to make.

A month later, Penn walked up to the hut with his arm around the 15-year-old Lizzie. "Hello, stepmama," she said to Coffey.

"She's coming with us, Jack," promised Penn. "They won't be marrying little Lizzie off behind my back."

They left the Great Barrier and came across the Anchialand with their load of fish. Here the girl gained her glorious freedom to the bush. She lived riotously. From a friend, Penn had borrowed the use of a canoe called Sovereign of the Seas. On board he and his human lived together for a week.

Coffey burned with jealousy. Whisking them, listening to them, he suffered all the more the torment of his defeat. He should be doing the same thing with the girl of his choice. He called Penn aside and suggested his plan. Penn agreed.

Their first necessity was to get possession of the Sovereign of the Seas. They did this simply by pinching it. They provisioned it for a long hard voyage, and sailed out of Anchialand Harbour.

Lizzie was delighted when Penn told her it was their aim to travel over the Pacific to South America. Out on the open sea, she wanted to know why they were starting a canoe towards Great Barrier Island.

Coffey told her bluntly: "Your master is coming with us."

Lizzie was taken aback. Then she said: "But Jack... we won't come. She's married, and you'll never be able to talk her into it."

"What makes you think I'm going to talk her into it?" said Coffey

Leaving Lizzie on board, they made their way towards the old settler's house. Everybody there had been horrified when at first the newspaper, then the truth, had burst upon them that Lizzie had gone with the two young fishermen to Anchialand. They were convinced she had been abducted, refusing to consider that she had consented to the flight. Something of the fear of kidnapping must have been in the minds of the two remaining girls for, having sighted the man approaching, they hid themselves.

The old man came to the door and walked towards them. "What have you done with Lizzie?" he said.

"Where's the girl?" returned Coffey, in a low voice.

Mrs. Taylor came to the door, then her son.

"You'll get no information from me," snapped the old man.

It was all over very quickly. Penn went on talking, threatened the old man, who was secretly alarmed. Coffey meanwhile walked around him, levelled his gun, and shot Taylor through the head. Mrs. Taylor gave a screaming scream. The boy stood frozen in horror. The terrible drama left the two youths unmoved. Without a glance at the dead man lying in a pool of blood, they left.

Neither of them said anything to Lizzie until they were out on the open sea. Then Penn remarked coolly: "We had to kill your father."

The girl was shocked. She went into a numb silence. Then she cried hysterically.

Coffey snarled: "For God's sake, Harry, shut her up."

"Take me back! Put me ashore! Please! Take me back!"

"We can't do that!" Penn was firm with her, and she saw no misery in his face.

"But what'll happen to us?" she asked.

(Please turn to page 12)



"I don't see why you're all mad because I bought four cards
to my set of hearts for a royal rummy!"



"We plan to get married as soon as the cake is all gone!"



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"Don't fret about that," said Penn. "We'll never be heard of again in New Zealand. We'll start a new life in South America."

They dawdled over a cabined sea. Everything should have been great all right but Coffrey was moody. And Penn was worried to death his grief-stricken partner.

A few days later Coffrey took Penn aside, and said to him, "Harry, I'm afraid she's going to split us up if Dead men tell no tales, you know."

Penn was horrified, then he shot furiously, "You're mad!"

"I'd be quick," Coffrey persisted. "Just one shot and done; her overboard. Who'd know?"

"If you touch Linda," roared Penn, "Till hell you!"

They left it at that, but Penn took no chances. He compromised his love in Linda. They took turns in watching while the other slept.

Terrible storms drove up from the east. In one of these Penn lost sight of Linda. Only when driven over the waves. Her clothes were sooty. She pinched and blanched in the storm-tossed sea, hurling onto the troughs, hitting on the crags.

Penn called her name. He pecked down into the cabin. And she was there. And with her was Coffrey. When she saw Penn, Linda screamed: "Harry, he tried to kill me. He tried to make me overboard."

"You're a lie," shouted Coffrey. "The wave caught us. She would have gone, only I dragged her back."

"You didn't drag. You pushed. You pushed," shrieked Linda.

Penn waited for no more. He sent his fist crashing into Coffrey's face. Coffrey crashed like a bullock and hit a dead rise.

The tension among them was stronger after that. It eased only when, after another storm, the boat sprung a leak, and a compass far their fate sealed up the rift temporarily. Coffrey, realising they could not make

America, had the only hope for them lay in leaving the boat and attempting to reach Australia.

Three weeks later, after a terrible ordeal against belligerent seas and frightening gales, they landed on the coast of N.S.W., where, to hide their tracks, they scuttled the boat. The tempests of the man drove them at each other's throats, and after a furious quarrel they parted. Coffrey went off on his own, Penn and the girl stayed together.

Meanwhile the crime had been publicised in New Zealand, and the police of South America and Australia were requested to watch for the criminals. Coffrey was arrested in N.S.W. only a short while before Penn and the girl. The day they embarked was a red-letter day for Sydney. Crowds converged to see them, excitedly climbing on to the roofs of wharf buildings and stationing themselves in the rigging of ships.

At the trial, along with Mrs. Taylor and her son, Linda gave evidence. Coffrey and Penn blanched and crimson-blushed each other; their counsel argued persuasively and powerfully for their loves. The jury returned a verdict of guilty, with a recommendation to mercy.

Judge Ward said: "You deserved your escape across, for the love of your wretched self so true that human eye could follow, but you forgot that the way of God is on the sea, and his path on the great oceans, and his reward the steers. A wind-swept which drives you westward to Australia, from whence you have been brought hither to meet your doom."

The day before their execution, February 21, 1937, Coffrey and Penn made full confessions. They went to the scaffold knowing that Mrs. Taylor at least held no animosity for them, since she had written to them in jail: "You have done me a cruel wrong in killing my husband, and it is hard for me, but I forgive you."



"Captain Henry Worthington, Secret Intelligence?"

THE BIG BLOW

An escaped convict—and a storm—over the compass she used against a hardened she-hawk.

★ By BARRY HILLS

I SAW the tree when I broke through the undergrowth, sweating and drooping at my breath like a condemned犯人。

I roared into the sky—a dead town of wood. A lightning bolt had scorched a great gnarled root in it low to the ground. Inside a huge hollow gape—but enough to house a platoon of soldiers. I stumbled across to the tree and sprawled through the crimson opening. Inside it was dry and warm. I fell upon the dry bed of chips that had piled up around the hollow and slept...

When I woke it had stopped raining. Outside it was nearly dark. The cold wind was still mounting beside the tree. It was warm and dark. I got to my feet slowly. I felt better. Lightning months of prison had stopped the trees thick flesh off me and given me a lean, hard body to exchange. It had served me better as my escape, but it didn't hold out the cold so well.

Suddenly a voice soared outside. I quivered with sudden fright, and crawled back further into the tree.

"Train, you boy! Get the wood for the fire! Fine berries you turned out to be! Get a move on, you worthless huck!"

A woman's voice answered wildly. There came the sound of something thrown, crashing against white wood—ad like a will. Roared comes followed, and then the sound of running footsteps. Faint, dying light was seeping through a crack in the tree level with my head. I peered through it.

There was a small clearing just past

ILLUSTRATED BY JACK SPARROW



The woman in the illustration is wearing a dark, flowing dress. She has long hair and is looking towards the right side of the frame with a somber expression. In the background, through a large, gnarled tree trunk, a man is visible, appearing to be in a state of distress or exhaustion. The scene is set outdoors, likely in a forest or clearing, with trees and foliage visible in the background.

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There was a small clearing just past

a low tree beyond the big one I was sheltering in. A boy home-grown to one side of it. A spotty carcass with a small stereoscope roomed up from the end of it was pulled in on the opposite side. A light inside the carcass showed by a moment the bulk of a man's shadow against a window.

The figure of a girl, head down, muttering wildly, was coming away from the clearing and heading towards the tree.

I crawled back in the tree. I



The woman in the illustration is wearing a dark, flowing dress. She has long hair and is looking towards the right side of the frame with a somber expression. In the background, through a large, gnarled tree trunk, a man is visible, appearing to be in a state of distress or exhaustion. The scene is set outdoors, likely in a forest or clearing, with trees and foliage visible in the background.

thought of all the dry shapes in there. My hand groping, found a big gnarled piece of wood. I took it up steadily and cracked further back.

The girl's footsteps came to the tree. Her bare blotted out the light coming through the split in the hollow. She squeezed through. As she did I grabbed her. My hand went over her mouth like a vice. At first she was too shocked to struggle. Then she started silently to kick and punch at me. In our struggle she took me forward into the dying light.

The light fell across my blond, curling hair, the eyes that the prison governor had shrank his head over and said belonged to a pest, and the nose an artist violin had said made him want to punch me.

She stopped struggling.

I could feel her suddenly warm and soft and heavy in my arms. The gray kerchief had slipped off her head. Her hair trailed downwards, black and heavy. I ran one hand through it, gingerly. Her blouse had been pushed aside. An olive-tinted breast pushed its way out, heavy from, high-sighted.

She ran the tips of her fingers gently across my cheek. Her eyes had a lunatic look. I bent my face down until our lips met here.

"Trans-York—where are you?"

The voice roared from the caravan. She put her hands against my chest and reluctantly pushed me away from her.

Her voice was low and clear. She said, "I'll bring you food-later."

She squirmed out through the split in the tree. I saw the blood running through my hot fire. The surface of her flesh still tingled against mine.

When I woke, her hand was over my mouth so I would not cry out. She whispered in my ear: "He's asleep. I've bought food."

I sat up and she, I could feel her near me in the darkness. When I had eaten I reached out for her. Later, when we hours had stopped their reckless hammering and again taken up their steady beat, her warm, full lips said around my ear, "If Leon knew I was here he'd drive a knife into me."

I said, "He is your husband!"

She said, "Yes. I was betrothed to him, as is our way, when I was a child. He cannot beat men so he beats me. He cannot do it to men because he has no legs—only twisted bones.

He throws his crutches at me. He beats me with them." She said, "Why were you in prison?"

I said, "I robbed a warehouse. I beat the nightwatchman."

She leaned back from me. Her eyes glared like a tiger's over the kill. She said, "Beat Leon for me. Beat him until the rest of his body is like his legs—twisted, useless."

She pressed her mouth savagely against mine. The ends of her fingers, clutching my shoulders, bit into the flesh. She said, "I'll come again tomorrow." I slept soundly.

To-morrow came. The day was still. There was something hot coming in the weather. The air got in arms around you and pressed tight. The day darkened early. I saw her moving through the crack in the tree. He did not come out of the caravan, but I heard him moving and throwing his crutches.

Towards the evening she took the pony harness and led him away. I guessed she was acting on the man's orders and taking the horse to better shelter from the thing that the weather was knowing up.

It kept getting darker. Darker and darker. Not the dusk of night, but the dark of something grim and terrible in the weather. Slowly the air that had been as still as death all day began to stir. A shift came into it. It started to move about you like the cold fingers of death.

Then somewhere away back in the darkness a sound started up. It was a long wailing noise, like the distant sobbing of a lost child. I knew what it meant, and I crouched down deeper in the tree.

Suddenly over by the caravan the girl leapt out. She stood there and began to throw stones back into the caravan. Her voice rose and fell in a manicure storm of cursing.

The man's voice roared back through the doorway. There came



"All I know is I was taking a bath and . . ."

the thumping sound of movement from inside the caravan. All of a sudden the man's form appeared in the doorway—a gross, manshape thing, legs twisted around the crutches. With amazing agility he leapt after the girl. She ran from him, still carrying him. He reeled, and chased after her—swinging his body along with the crutches like an ape through the branches of a tree. She drew farther from him. He snarled and threw a crutch at her. She grabbed it up and ran back at him. She hit the other crutch from under his arm. He sprawled on the ground. She grabbed up the other crutch and ran towards me and the tree.

Back on the ground the man looked up at the sky. He roared at her, cursing her, telling her to come back. She ran on. It was getting darker. He began to shake—his screams to beg her to a high, shrill voice.

She reached the tree. She squirmed through its roots, bracelets jangling. She could not speak, but her eyes were glittering like a tiger's and she held the crutches out at me with shaking hands.

I looked through the crack in the tree at the man. He was looking up from the ground into the face of the thing that was nearly on him. His face was stark with truth-convulsed fear. I went to go out of the tree to have hit the girl turn at me with her hands. Her nails cinched my feet and chest. When I had beaten her off the thing had hit me.

The sound of it was like all the noise of the world rushing together to meet in one great ocean bed.

The tree quivered and shook as the great balls of white frost that were driven before the wind smashed against it. The darkness was lit up every few seconds by a lancing flame of lightning. The rain lashed everything like a thousand-thonged whip,

the spray of it dashing through the crack in the tree like a foreman's beer being played through it.

It was as if we were crouched under the sole of a bursting dam. We had clung together, clutching one another frenziedly. We were two fragments of horribly cowering before the wrath of nature.

It passed so quickly as it had come—racing us into the night, an instant past intent on further mad destruction elsewhere. Done and done, battered bladdered, exhausted we slept.

* * *

When I wake, the girl was standing up, looking through the crack in the tree. She turned to me. She was smiling, her black eyes glittering. She held out her hand. She said, "Come."

I went out of the tree with her. The great balls of hail were piled everywhere, monomaniac trees torn down by the fury of the wind. Nine out of every ten trees had been flung to the earth like weeds plucked from a garden-bed. We plunged knee-deep through water.

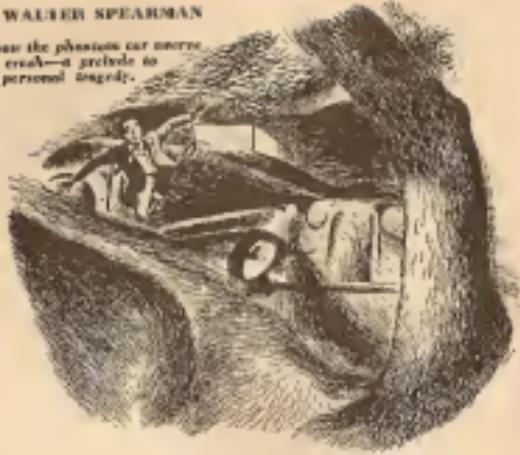
She led me to where her brother was screaming for his crutches. There was a mound of hail there. She fell to her knees and cleared it aside. His body came into view. His hands were clasped around his head, but they had not done much good. Balls of hail had been hammered onto his skull like huge round teeth. The blood had frozen around the edges of them in uneven red lines. She glared over him. She had the crutches with her. She started to beat him with them. When she had finished she threw them aside, panting. She said, "I'll get the horse." When she'd gone I scrambled across the clearing, back past the big tree, and took the way I had come the first day. When I heard her voice in the distance calling me, I ran harder.



"...but let's not have any further treatise on the application of mechanical advantages of the new revised method of a metal contraption which you designed with a body fossilized to destroy."

By WALTER SPEARMAN

**He saw the phantom car moreover
and crash—a prelude to
his personal tragedy.**



The man with Second sight

THE recent strange experience of Mrs. Nellie Letherland, wife of a Northampton farmer, results in an even stronger and more tragic experience that befell a Hungarian in Budapest in the late twenties of this century.

On the bottom of a metal bucket she had bought five months before, Nellie Letherland had seen the face of a man, that of her dead

brother, Robert Forrest. When psychic experts took an interest, they emerged photographs with cameras, scraped the bucket, and invited it with rods. Their conclusion was that Nellie Letherland was not the victim of hallucinations.

When Mrs. Letherland stated her belief that the face was fading T. Ellerton Scott, president of the Northampton Psychics Society, shook

his head and told her that the image was even clearer after he had covered the bucket with a wire brush and powder. As well as the impression of a man's face, he said he also saw the image of a horse.

This has some significance when it is realized that the dead man, Fassett, was a circus showman.

Such an experience will naturally meet with some, great inherent, incredulity, and belief. Perhaps the safest course to steer with regard to psychic phenomena is a middle one—that of the sceptic, who prefers to leave the issue open until convincing scientific proof verifies it as fact. This must certainly apply in the case of George Kirton; his story reads most strangely than weird fictions; it could be the plot of an arch-writer of macabre tales.

Kirton was a small dapper man, a gentleman of breeding and culture, though on a beggarly scale by his wealthy father. He was one of the lions of Hungarian society, as noted for his trenchant wit, his jocular abilities, as much as for his differences with women. He was sought after to be present at society functions, and match-making mothers with discontented daughters were constantly pressing him for his attentions.

Kirton was a hard liver, strictly devoted to serving Marzorati, and staying himself in all the joys of decadent existence. He struck up resentment against him among the many moderate and deeply religious who abominated him. He had a brilliant gift for logical analysis. He had also been in hot water with not a few husbands whose wives had been charmed by his spells, and who had laid their怨 at his feet.

On a warm summer night he had been invited to a dinner given by one of the famous hostesses in a wealthy part of the town. With the

air of his voice, Kirton put the finishing touches to his dressing. His mustache was waxed to perfection. His hair was parted back like Wagner. He was dressed like a Brummell, and, like Brummell, having dressed to the best of his ability he forgot himself. Only the little puff under his eyes betrayed his absolute living.

He went out to the garage, and brought out his car. He was looking forward to the drive, with the fragrance from the gardeons filling the air.

Kirton had about five miles to go. He started the car down the drive, on to the quiet road, and got on his way.

He had not gone two miles when he felt a cold numbing sensation in his brain. Thinking himself about to faint, he caused the car on to the side of the road and slowed up. Then his vision shrank with an unexpected suddenness, and a hundred yards down the road he saw an incoming car move erratically, bounce on to the grass, and smash into a tree.

The shattering sound was clear in his ears.

He stopped his own car, and shot off the motor. Bewildered, expecting to have screens, the smashing of wheels, any emanation of the collision, he stepped out on to the road. His brain was beginning again, and he staggered. But as before it cleared rapidly, and he half-ran towards the scene of the accident.

The surrounding moonlight was bright, but the trees cast thick shadowed shadows, and he was not astonished when, as he went towards it, he could not pick out the bulk of the broken car.

He was astonished only when on reaching the scene there was nothing to be found. Nothing but space dimmed by the overhanging foliage, with a soft whisper of wind in the trees and the crisp sound of his own feet on the grass. No sign of a car

Krings was considerably shaken. His look was now as clear as crystal. He could not have imagined it. First thought he had felt, the whole vista had been presented to his gaze—the car and all the circumambient scenery. The memory was still there, everything was there except the car. Was it possible that he had seen a phantom? The rigid materialist mind reviled this idea. But then he had heard the sound of the smash—the scratching thud as it hit the tree, the rattling and grinding of metal.

It must have been a hallucination. This thought, when he would admit no other of a psychic or supernatural colour, strengthened in his mind, particularly in association with the swimming head and the faint feeling he had experienced just prior to it.

He went back to his car and drove on. His friend, Joseph Sagervary whom he had to pick up, was waiting for him at the gate of his house. Sagervary was a young man, well-off, son of the social élite; he had nothing for a friend except love. He greeted Krings with great cordiality, settled himself in beside his friend, and then, turning with a smile to Krings drew up short in his speech to exclaim: "My dear fellow, whatever is the matter?"

"The matter?" asked Krings with a slight ruffle of pose.

"Your face!"

"What is the matter with my face?"

"It's as pale. Have you been ill?" Sagervary was shocked.

Krings was about to tell him the reason for his disturbed feelings, but realized that it would serve no end except to fill Sagervary's mind with gossip, which he would relate to the pleasure of the company. After all, it would have its point, a very apt point. George Krings, the pessimistic atheist of all that was other-worldly; the materialist monocrat of all that smacked of spirituality; and

here he was involved in an experience which smacked of the psychic. Even if it had been a reality fostered by his sudden swoon, Krings knew that there were people who would explain that very swoon as an action not of the mind but of the soul, in which he did not believe.

No, it was too embarrassing to mention.

"Are you sure you're well?" persisted Sagervary.

"Perfectly," madded Krings. "If you must know, I almost knocked down an old peasant back there."

Sagervary sighed. "I thought you'd had a tone of some sort. It's written all over your face."

"Well," retorted Krings. "Allow it to demonstrate that the face of man is an inveterate tale-bearer, and let it sit at that."

Relieved, Sagervary began to chat lightly of Madame Maria Fullmer, who was to be their hostess tonight.

"You know her well, George?" he asked.

"Tolerably," snarled Krings.

"She is the most charming woman in Budapest, but she is so virtuous it is impossible to wean her away from her husband, even though his business fortunately takes him away to crash."

"No woman is beyond the conquest of man," affirmed Krings.

"The master speaks," grinned Sagervary, respectfully.

By the time they had reached the house, Krings had subverted the unpleasant episode on the road, and as he went into the brightly lighted salons he became his native self, greeted by the hostess and surrounded by beautiful women and idle, brilliant men. Many more fell from his lips to make the company laugh; he analysed situations with a quip, described people for ill or good with a style of refined wit.

Maria Fullmer, with a figure like a reed, draped in sariot, her short black hair piled in coils on her head,



"You look into her eyes . . . you raise an eyebrow. Then we pass to the next scene . . . the cause is vague and you're both trembling water . . ."

smiled warmly at him and with the others listened fascinated to his talk.

"Someone said to him: 'Tell me, Mr. Kriegl, what do you think is the most important current affair?'"

"The human race," shot back Kriegl.

The company laughed and clapped. Another voice said: "Do you really think so, old man?"

"If the human race," said Kriegl, "is not a current affair, then at least it is a permanent one."

He was in his best mood, with an appreciative audience to listen to him.

It was when they went into the dining room that Kriegl changed. He was sitting about three chairs from Maria Pultmar, who presided at the end of the table. Suddenly, in the midst of a sentence, his voice died away, and he stared at the hostess with a look of horrified stupefaction. There was silence for a few moments. Maria Pultmar saw his blank, wide stare; looked startled, then smiled. "What is wrong, Mr. Kriegl?"

The words seemed to shake Kriegl out of his preoccupation. He smiled and spoke, saying something about the affinity of extreme beauty to magnificence.

People went on eating and talking and laughing. But Kriegl was silent. Various questions addressed to him seemed to go unheard until a nudging or a tug at his coat sleeve caused him to recollect himself. He could not drag his eyes away from the face of the woman, Maria Pultmar. He hardly ate anything.

Now and then he would start forward as though to speak to her, then pause in his chair. People were beginning to notice his behaviour, and asked him sympathetically if he were well. Supterry looked considerably annoyed with him. He could not understand the strange tenderness of his friend. They were entirely plain to Kriegl. What pained him most was Kriegl's face, the dead white

expression, the spasm of horror in its fleeting expression, the dark narrative eyes.

Dinner passed, and they were leaving the dining room, when Supterry caught Kriegl's sleeve and drew him into a corner. "Whatever's wrong with you, George? People are beginning to think you're either drunk or mad."

"Supterry," said Kriegl, "I beg you not to ask me what it is but I must leave at once."

"But," protested Supterry, "the party hasn't started yet."

"No, Joseph, I must go. We've got to get out of that."

Supterry saw that it was no use. He was annoyed and disgruntled. "Very well, then. But at least apologise to Madame Pultmar and bid her good-bye."

Kriegl was now losing all his self-possession; sweat stood out on his forehead. "No, no!" he cried. "I must get away from here. This instant!" With that he dashed away. Supterry was staggered and disengaged.

Kriegl rushed out in a cold sweat of horror and spasm into the sun. His body was shaking, and he heard himself panting. He spun the wheel, soared down the road. How could he explain it? Did he have second sight? What did it mean? He asked himself these questions while all the time the image was vivid in his mind—the image he had seen without warning as they sat down to dinner back at the house. Standing behind her, Maria Pultmar, Kriegl had seen a devil. It was at the back of her chair, a horrid sight, just standing there, watching her every movement; its lips slithering into a grin whenever the woman took up a knife, and the grin distortion as it made a murderous gesture with an hand, drawing it across its throat.

Kriegl would never forget it. And he feared. He feared it was an omen.

(Please turn to page 34)



"If this works we'll go on the stage!"



hindering fruitful desire to himself. The car gathered speed. His mind was in a flurry of mystery and doubt; first the phantom crash, and then the devil. Nothing had ever paralleled them in his experience. Why should they happen to him?

He unsteered the speed of the car, flying madly away from he knew not what.

In a sudden impulse of sanity he recalled that the car was leaving the road, was bumping over the ground, there was a great-gnawed two rattling up to meet it; and as he averted, flung himself sideways, blinding his eyes with his hands, he knew that this was the spot where he had seen the incoming car, where he had seen the crash, and he knew that he had beaten his own disaster.

He knew nothing more—nothing more until he came out of a coma. There were lights and voices, and he

was in a hospital room. Sargevery was sitting beside him, muttered something about being so disturbed at his behavior that he followed him, and found him unconscious in the wretched car.

"I thought you were dead, and can't help," said Sargevery.

By degrees he learned that he had been five days lying unconscious in hospital, and that his shaming hostess, Marie Pilkiss, had cut her throat when the news of his supposed death had been announced by Sargevery. Nobody knew why.

George Kressel said he had been her lover.

Months later, when he was well again, he told Sargevery the whole story, and Sargevery had reprinted it in a little book, translated under the title, *Nights and Days of a Gentleman*.

Form Reversal...

One of the most remarkable records in boxing is that of Bobbie Bill Square, Australian heavyweight champion of the early 1920's. Until Square came on the scene, the glamor boy of the period was Peter Folio. Square knocked him out on three occasions—and ran up a sequence of knockout victories that was truly sensational. In Australia, he fought 13 times, and not one match went the limit. Few of them, in fact, lasted more than 10 rounds.

With that reputation behind him, Square journeyed to the United States. He was matched with Tommy Burns, and was knocked out in the first round.

From then on, Square continued to take part in jingo matches—but the difference now was that the Australian was almost invariably on the receiving end. In eight subsequent fights, Square was flattened in seven occasions, and his only win was over a man billed as the champion of Ireland.

Thus, not one of his 26 fights went the distance. At the close of his career, his record read 18 wins by knockout and eight losses by the same route!



HYSTERIC HISTORIES

With Stuart down the Darling

R USH up the Union Jack," said Stuart to his friend, George Macleay.

Luckily, Macleay was wearing shorts, and was able to clamber off and run up the flagpole without much difficulty.

"What's the idea?" he said when he came down.

"We've discovered the Darling," said Stuart.

"Is that good?"

"Good enough. This river flows into the Hunter River, and the Hunter River is practically in Victoria, and Melbourne is in Victoria. What's to day?"

"Tuesday."

"The month?"

"November."

"What Tuesday?"

"The second one."

"Then," said Stuart, "we'll get cracking."

"What for?" asked Macleay.

"I've drawn a starter in the Cup." Macleay sat down and looked stubbly at his friend.

"Fifty-fifty," he said stubbornly. Stuart sat down also, and glared at his friend.

"This," he said, "is a race howdy do. I let you in on the expedition, bring you all this distance, and stop you from being eaten by the sharks. And what happens?"

"What?" asked Macleay, interestedly.

"You stand over me. Why don't you get a naked in this yourself?"

"Did. Got a blank, but."

Saddeningly Stuart started up. Through the mist of the morning were emerging shortly shapes. They were sur-

rounded by blank! Stuart, however, approached them fractionally.

"What's that queer clicking noise?" said Macleay. "It sounds like giddy coaches."

Stuart replied, "My teeth snap!" and continued toward the blanks.

"You talk like plenty sober?" he said plausibly.

"No tobacco," responded one of the strangers. "You gotten Cheesefield or Philip Morris?"

"No Only tobacco."

"You sellin' Cossels on black?" The stranger's voice was rasped.

"No sellin'. White falls has plenty hairy, get to Melbourne. You better get go."

"Letterm go."

Much relieved Stuart and Macleay continued their journey until at last they came to Melbourne. The city was deserted.

"What's today?" said Stuart. "I told you, Tuesday," said Macleay. "The second one in November?"

"Yes."

"What year?"

"Eighteen hundred and twenty-four."

Stuart, becoming very angry, threw his hat on the ground.

"A luxury trick, that's what it is. Now we've got to wait till 1881—and what a hell of a place Melbourne is to spend all those years in!"

"What's we got to wait for?"

Stuart looked at him with a poised expression.

"What do you think, mag? The first Melbourne Cup isn't being run off then?"



WINGS OF THE SNOWBIRD

Camera Art

16 MAN JUNIOR, October, 1968

Gargan



Ford

BRAVE NEW WORLD

MAN JUNIOR, October, 1968 37



MALE TRIUMPHANT

Fedor

36 MAN JUNIOR, October, 1948



Fedor

HANDS OF THE POTTER

MAN JUNIOR, October, 1948. 39



PEACEFUL ANCHORAGE

© MAN JUNIOR October, 1962.



Fader

Banney

CONCERTINA MAN

MAN JUNIOR October, 1962 41



STUDY BY EVERARD

Surprise Selection

Vernon Lake has the smallest waist in Hollywood. It measures only 20½ inches—¾ inches less than the average film star's. Only one other film star has had as narrow a waist. In her heyday, Mary Pickford had the same measurement.

The "Pied Piper of Stokolma," as the nickname the people of Carly, Norway, Berkastel, have given to Mr J. W. Horwood, who has come to destruction with an imitation of their water call on a reed-pipe.

American families will soon be confronted with square eggs at their breakfast table. A Massachusetts vegetable has damaged a plastic cube so he held the ends of the egg. Machinery breaks the shell, pours the contents into the cube and makes it air-tight. The square egg saves packing space and is unbreakable.

The first School of Cricket in India has been established by H.H. The Maharajah of Purbender.

The glove industry in Paris has announced the creation of a two-headed glove designed for holding hands in daily picture theaters.

The fastest automatic computer or "mathematical brain" in use is known as the Briss. It does 20,000 man-hours of actual work in two hours.

Charles O. Haselby, Jr., an American biologist thought he was seeing things when on one of Canada's forbidding north islands, a rabbit rose up on its hind feet in front of him and ran like a man. On his return to U.S., Haselby visited scientific libraries, and found theistic hare's strange behaviour recorded in print.

Engineers and geologists say that by 21,000 A.D., the Niagara Falls will no longer exist, because the Niagara river will become a gigantic whirlpool higher up in Lake Erie. The Falls are continually retreating leaving banks less than a canyon seven miles long and 200 feet deep.

Seventeen-year-old Peter van Jaarsveld in Southern Rhodesia is able to "see" underground streams, as well as gold and diamonds, through rock without even a diamond rod. Peter has named a company with a mining syndicate in Johannesburg to prospect for gold and diamonds.



MURDER

shows its face

GERALD BY JACK BRADLEY

We had the face of an angel and the heart of a murderer—a dangerous combination.

HE had first discovered his face when he was ten years old. He had stolen a watch belonging to a classmate and everybody in the class had been suspected except himself. That night, after he had hidden the watch under a pile of toys in his closet, he had gone to the mirror and looked at his face.

It was the face of an angel.

"Gee!" he had exclaimed, reply-
"Nobody in the world would believe
a punk with a face like that could be
crooked."

When he had left home, he had
gone to the underworld so naturally
as an alcoholics drifting to the nearest
bar. Then an old-timer in the
underworld had given him the tip that
had changed his life.

"Get away from the rough stuff
and stay away from it, kid. A guy
with a face like yours could go to the
top in a strictly legitimate racket.
Look, I'm giving you the address of a
friend of mine in Melbourne. She
calls herself Madame Zone, and that's
only a small-time bird-bride, but
she can give you a start."

Madame Zone had given him a
start all right. In two years he was
one of the best mail-order boys in the

racket. But he was not satisfied.
The big dough, he began to realize,
was in a course of lessons, where
you could act a whole round of
the masters in a day.

So, he had launched the Stephen
Warren School for the Development
of the Inner Personality, and it had
been a success from the start. Women
now that smooth, open face, noted
that gently boozing voice and came
back with their friends.

Then he had started giving lessons
by mail! The money began to pour
in. And every one of those respects
brought back a series of lessons with
Stephen Warren's photo at the top of
the first page.

Every small town in the country
had someone who owned Stephen
Warren's photo on a course of
lessons. And, for every one who owned
a photo on those lessons there were
thousands who had seen it in new-
spapers or magazines, and on bill-
boards . . .

Warren jerked his head up wildly.
He had been nodding, and the big car
had crept over until it was seven
inches from the edge of the road. He
pulled it back to safety and snarled:



*"I'm willing to give you this for
the operation if you want to do
it. I think you know what I mean."*

ILLUSTRATED BY GERHARD LANTZ

wearily, as he shifted the heavy 45 automatic to a more comfortable position under his shoulder.

Surely there must be someone in these hills who had never seen his face in a newspaper or on a billboard. And yet, he would have to be so careful. He had left two murdered people behind him, and he knew that his crime must have been broadcast all over the whole eastern seaboard.

Absently, he had a dashing vision of Mildred, lying there with the dark blood seeping out of the great hole the 45 had blasted in her chest and her whispering weakly:

"Mildred! Mildred! Why did it have to end this way?"

* * *

Mildred Hastings had been just another of his pagina—first. Then he had begun to realize that her face was a frenzied counterpart of his own. The same innocent eyes, the same look of absolute trustworthiness. The difference was that her face spoke the truth. Presently he began to want this girl more than he had ever wanted anything in his whole life.

Oddly enough, she returned his love. She really believed he was doing a great and noble work. They would have been satisfied in another week had it not been for the arrival of old man Simpson.

He had been taking Simpson over for a \$10,000 "investment" and Mildred had walked in on them at exactly the wrong moment. She had seen the whole set-up in a flash and had denounced him. As long as he lived he would never be able to forget the tears in her eyes as she told him, "You are the most contemptible thing I have ever known."

Old man Simpson had rushed for the phone to call the police and Warner had drawn the gun merely to frighten him. Who would have

dreamed that the old fool would try to jump a man with a 45 in his hand? Somehow, the gun had gone off and Simpson had ended up on the floor with half his face blown away.

And then Stephen Warner had gone completely berserk. There was a roaring in his ears and, through it all, he had seen Mildred coming toward him, that look of utter loathing still in her face. With that roaring still in his ears, he had fired one shot from the big automatic rifle he had then rushed out of the house the smoking gun still in his hand. And now, he knew, every newspaper and radio in the country was warning citizens to be on the lookout for him.

He raised his burning eyes and stared at the unending ribbon of concrete that lay ahead of him, trying to see a cut-off road. His eyes were too strained to see the "Dangerous Curve" sign ahead of him. The next thing he knew he was whizzing straight out toward the edge of the cliff and a fifty-foot drop. He screamed shrilly and shut his eyes as he writhed frantically at the wheel. There was a blinding crash, and then the whole universe was filled with screaming thunder and crackling flames. Then merciful oblivion.

He felt that it was but a split second before he opened his eyes again. He was in a pit filled with great, roaring flames. He raised his hand a little. A few feet away from him the car lay on its side, blazing furiously. Then he saw a great, bearded face bending over him. As from a great distance, he heard the man's voice:

"Come on, master! Gotta get you away from here before she blows up. Come on! You gotta help me."

By some miracle of will-power, he managed to stagger to his feet, and the bearded man half led, half carried him back up the hill. The rest

(Please turn to page 50)



"Care to sign across the showroom?"



"They don't have the well-dishes here they used to."

of it was a blurry nightmare of stumbling over rocks and fallen logs through the thick woods until, sans later, he saw a rough shack looming up before him. Then there was a rough bed and he was slumbering towards it. That was the last thing he remembered . . .

When he awoke, he was in bed, and his face and hands had been bandaged. Werner turned his head weakly and saw the bearded man sitting beside the bed.

"What happened?" he asked.

The old fellow turned and deliberately spat tobacco juice through an open window. "Well," he said, "you come round that curve like a bat out of hell and crashed smack into a tree. I just happened to be there, and I ran down to the road and pulled you out. Tore you bared to death. Shore had a time gettin' you home to my place, too. Then I went out and got old Doc Winters and he fixed you up fine."

"Dad—did the doctor know who I was?"

"Nops, not at first. Then he looked at your driver's license and found your name. Said he'd ask you how to get in touch with your folks when he come back tomorrow."

Werner's brain was racing madly. A hick doctor who hadn't recognized him. It was absolutely perfect. The driver's license in his pocket bore a phony name, of course—he had carried it for years for just such an emergency as this. And, for the same reason, he was carrying nearly \$1000, in a secret compartment in his wallet. If his hick doctor would only listen to reason . . .

"Tell you what, old-timer," he said slowly. "I may have to stay here for a while, until the doctor gets through with me. But I'll pay you all a day for the time I'm here. So I want you to understand one thing: You're not to mention me being here to anyone."

You see, I'm a—a sort of government man."

The old man nodded eagerly.

"Fine. And, as soon as the doctor comes tomorrow, I want you to take a walk for a few minutes. Something I want to say to the doctor." Werner's brain was hot with excitement. Once he was free of that trade-mark free of it, he could make his way back to the city, where he had the bulk of his money in a bank, under another name.

Dr. Winters came a little before noon the next day, and Werner waited impatiently while he fiddled with bandages. The doctor was a shrivelled beady-eyed little man, almost as unwholesome as his host. When he had replaced the bandages, Werner recalled the old maxim about to withdraw, then pulled out his wallet from beneath his pillow. From it he took \$100. He held it up before the doctor.

"I want a little operation done on my face, Doctor," he said slowly. "I want it fixed so I'll look different. And I'm willing to give you this for the operation if you want to do it. I think you know what I mean."

The doctor's beady eyes tightened with excitement as he looked at the notes. "I reckon I could fix you up, sir. It wouldn't be much of an operation."

Werner said curtly: "I want the operation done right here, in this place. And nobody with you except the old-timer. I have my reasons."

The doctor started to protest. Then he glared again at the notes and slowly nodded his head.

* * *

The long days dragged by interminably. The operation, Dr. Winters assured him, had been a success, but it would be some time before the bandages could be removed.

Just before the operation had started, Dr. Winters had swung up a small mirror and snapped a picture of his



"Never saw anyone as jaded! It's your size, isn't it?"

face. It had happened so quickly that Werner had not had time to stop him.

"What's the idea of that?" he growled.

The doctor had looked at him in surprise. "Why, because I want you to see the difference in your face now and when I'm through with it," he said blandly. "Don't worry, I won't show the picture to anybody."

Stephen Werner had wanted to protest but had thought better of it. A day or two more, and he could be on his way back to the city and his money. And then . . . He waited impatiently while the old doctor laid a cheap hand mirror on the bed beside him and leisurely started to remove the bandages. When the last one was removed, Dr. Whistman stood back and looked at him with satisfaction.

"Haaaaa! Not bad," he remarked merrily. "Not bad at all. No, sir, I bet one of them high-priced city specialists couldn't done a better job. No, sure!"

Werner snatched up the mirror with hands that were shaking like leaves. He held before his face and almost shrieked aloud in his anguish. Why, the damn old fool had not done one thing to his face! No, that was not quite true. The long scab had cut were still raw and there was a large patch of his face that was a slightly different shade than the rest. But the features were still the same.

"Boy!" Dr. Whistman's voice was suddenly cold and sharp. "Aint I seen you somewhere before?"

Werner looked up quickly. The old doctor was standing before his peering intently at his face. Back of him, the bearded mustachio was leaning forward.

"Whip, sure I have," the doctor went on excitedly. "You're that feller that runs that phony school down Beath

The same feller that killed them two people."

Werner hurled the mirror straight at the old man, then turned around and mashed the silk from under his pillow. The red face was before his again and he slowly raised the big gun, started to squeeze the trigger.

There was a blinding roar from across the cabin, and he saw the bullet leap from his hand, felt his whole arm go numb. He looked around dully. The bearded mustachio was standing out in the middle of the room, a rifle in his hand and smoke was curling up badly from the muzzle.

"I thought that all a day was too good to be true," the old fellow said sadly. "Because you can hold him here while I go over and get the police, Doc?"

"Don't see why not," Dr. Whistman replied absentmindedly. Suddenly he threw back his head and began laughing.

"I got it all figured out now," he gasped, between howls of laughter. "Haaa I was, thinking you wanted me to graft some new skin on your face so those burns wouldn't show, and all the time you was wanting me to do one of them plastic surgery jobs, no nobody would know who you was."

"And what's all them fuzzy about then?" Stephen Werner asked sourly.

Old Dr. Whistman went on laughing and wiping the tears out of his eyes. "Why, you damn fool, you already had a plastic job done as your face—a better job, for your purposes, than the finest specialist in the world could have done. Here. Take a look at that!"

He handed Werner the snapshot he had taken before beginning the operation.

The snapshot was that of a face marred and twisted by fire until it bore no slightest resemblance to his own. His own mother wouldn't have recognized him with that face.



Roberts, smuggler of human cargo, paid for his mistake in style.

By OTTO REEDY



The Body in the Box

"WELL, damn my eyes!" said William Wells, chief officer of the steamer *Shamrock*.

The white-faced man is the cabin doorway was trembling violently. He had just told Wells an incredible story, and the chief officer, starting to his feet, had dropped his pipe in horrified amazement. There was a moment's silence. Then, not at all

concerned of his companion's words, Wells said sharply: "Come on deck, Roberts! We'll get to the bottom of this, or I'll know the reason why."

Charles Roberts began to cry.

He was a little man in early middle-age, and he cried like a baby, slowly, brokenly. The hot tears cut glistening furrows down his cheeks and impelled suddenly of a grief he

couldn't understand, Wells pushed him to one side. He went into the passageway and stumbled up the companion ladder to the *Shamrock's* half-deck. Roberts stumbled after him.

It was the afternoon of Monday March 15, 1917. The *Shamrock*, its paddle-wheels churning innocently through the sluggish swell, was two and a half days out of Leavenworth on its regular Haen Strait crossing. It was bound for its home port of Sydney, by way of Melbourne, Eden and Twofold Bay, and the sun, which had been beating down all day with oven heat, was low on the horizon. For all that, the air was still warm, even a little oppressive.

Passengers stared with curiosity at the distressed Roberts. He had come alone at Leavenworth with his two small children, his luggage—a couple of heavy trunks—loaded on a wheelbarrow. He had watched the steamer stow the trunks in the after-hold, and, at one stage, had cried out unexpectedly: "Be careful of that box, whatever you do! Be careful, please!" After that—or so they were to remember later—he behaved half-benign, more than passing vicious, his condition "unusual and disordered."

Wells was a man of action.

By now he was at the after-hold, with Roberts, still sobbing bitterly, close at his heels. The hatch had been battened down at Leavenworth on the previous Saturday, and, as a seaman pealed it loose, an unpleasant odor came like a breath of death from the twilight depths. Roberts let out a heart-broken cry.

"Curious neighbors begin to gather. "Stand back!" Wells ordered.

A trunk of hay had been dumped on top of the latrines and now only subdued grunting of two seamen, the rhythmic "clunk, clunk" of the paddle-wheels, disturbed the silence. They hauled the hay to the deck, and impelled by a sense of urgency, Wells

clambered down on the confusion of bags and boxes. He was running feverishly along some fast bags close to the bulkhead when Roberts called out brokenly "That's it we're—just starting on it."

"God have mercy on you!" Wells muttered.

The trunk that Roberts had indicated was lifted from the hold. It was a narrow wooden box, not more than three feet in length and two feet six inches in height, and there was a space beneath the lid just sufficient for Wells to insert his fingers. He was forcing it open when Captain Gilmore—the ship's master, who had been summoned from the poop, pushed his way through the press of curious passengers. The news of tragedy had spread like fire through the steamer and excitement was at feverish pitch when the lid was suddenly lifted. Inside the box was the decomposing body of a woman.

She sat with her knees drawn close to her chin, her arms sprawled as though stricken, even in her last sleep to force upward the impounding lid. Apparently she had died on the Saturday night—slow, agonizing death from suffocation. There had been four contributing factors—the battening down of the hatch, the inadequate shelves in the box itself, the tenss of hay that had protected her opening the lid, and the heat of the steam boiler in the adjoining hold.

Roberts was not the only one crying now. Several women screamed hysterically, and, with faces averted, hurried from the scene. The fact, dimmed by them in that brief moment, had been twisted in an agony of fear.

Gilmore saw through smoky eyes the stifling blackness of the hold, heard the hissing voices of the seamen, sensed in a detached sort of way the incredible terror that, for a few brief hours, had banished the

forgotten corner of the steaming Shireeck. The woman, quite obviously had enticed the hold slave. A few days before, she had been a living wraith baring in the steaming darkness, she had held unwholesome rendezvous with Death, fighting it—do hours, maybe—with snuffed screens and closing finger nails. She had died in earnest, a passenger in a wooden box beneath a mass of hay. The thought oppressed Gilmore. Turning abruptly to his chief officer, he said: "Arrest that man, Mr. Wells!"

After that he didn't waste much time.

Roberts, overcome by a grief that had touched the heart of the most hardened passenger, was placed under lock and key; thereafter the dead woman, wrapped in a shroud and appropriately muffled, went over the Shireeck's side in an unmarked grave. Gilmore clased his Bible on the burial service, and, without more ado, counted himself a court of inquiry.

The woman, it was soon revealed, was Henry Robinson Roberts—Roberts' wife and the mother of his two children. They had been known to Harry Smith, a Shireeck passenger, for many years, and on the Friday before the tragedy, he had met them together in George Street, Launceston. They had laughed and joked with him in apparent "high good humour"; it fact, so far as he could recall, they had always been happy together.

The evidence fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle.

There was, first of all, the mysterious cry that had disturbed the seaman, Richard Hatherley. The vessel had anchored at George Town, at the mouth of the Tamar River, early on Saturday evening. Several boxes had come ashore and Hatherley had been told to stow them in the hold. The hatch had been taken off.

"It was then I heard the cry."

Hatherley mainly told the captain. "It was very faint and, on first reckoning, it seemed to come from the hold itself. But there were so many children about, I thought I must—a been mistake."

"Plain fact of the matter, sir, I took no notice of it."

Gilmore glanced through his notes. No person named Nancy Roberts had been allotted a cabin at Launceston, and her presence aboard had not been suspected when, only that morning, the clearing officer at George Town had received the passengers for a final check-over. That was the background to the story. The rest was up to Roberts.

It was difficult to make sense out of him—he grief was so great. He was, he explained, a labouring man who could neither read nor write. Several years before he had married Nancy. And, as Harry Smith had already stated, they had found in their life together companionship and happiness.

But it had been a happiness overshadowed by the chum-chum and the whipping-post, the harsh brutality and maltreatment of Australia's penal system. For Nancy Roberts had been a convict under sentence of transportation, and, despite the savings that had given her own children and a measure of freedom, she had narrowly a soul to sell her own.

She had been assigned to Roberts—convict girls in those days were nothing more than chattels! Then Roberts, very much in love, had married her, and in Launceston they had settled down to the hard-drug life of labouring people. Neighbours had come to know them as an industrious and thrifty couple.

Things might have gone on that way if Opportunity, with a capital "O," had not beckoned Roberts unexpectedly to the Australian mainland. What that Opportunity was the records do not show.



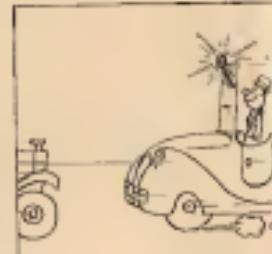
"Me's getting married, but not to you. Now don't be I didn't break it gently."



But Nancy Roberts had been as excited as he at the prospect offering light-heartedness they had gathered together their worldly possessions, and, as a matter of routine, he had told the authorities of his future intentions. The official doctor, however, had left nothing to the imagination. He could go if he wished—he and his two children—but Nancy Roberts would have to stay.

He had planned and cogited, but to no good purpose. Nancy Roberts, he was convinced, was an engaged novice. As such, she must remain within the jurisdiction of Van Dieman's Land, and, as no circumstances could guarantee her freedom for her transfer to the mainland. At that stage, both Sydney and Port Phillip were in revolt against the transportation system, and even its remote outposts such as Geelong, note critics were denouncing the system of prison labor "either direct or indirect", as a danger to the material interests of the colony and something which "would exert the most blighting influence on the normal and social well-being of the community". So far as Nancy Roberts was concerned, there was as yet not. That at least was what the authorities thought. Nancy Roberts had other ideas.

Her plan had been simple.



can't be done," Roberts had persisted vigorously.

In the end, Nancy herself had bought the ill-fated box. There had been others in the plot, but, on this point, the grief-stricken husband was adamant—he would not, in any circumstances, disclose their names. They had helped him bring the trunk aboard and had assisted in its stowage. Nancy had been slow then and tardy before they had stowed her in the after-hold; he had spoken to her, then conversation, a conspiracy of words without real significance. The one thing he had not insinuated for had been that truce of hoy.

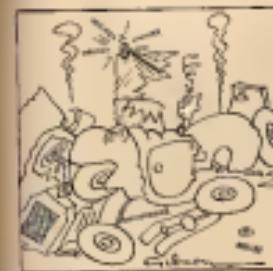
"But 'twas all my fault, and, if ye don't mind, sir, I'll take the blame for it," Roberts told Gilmore. And, with equal stubbornness, he refused to put his mark to the written summary of his statement.

Gilmore gave an expressive shrug.

"I'm not going to help you, Roberts," he said sternly.

A few days later, the Shamrock, due to anchor in Port Phillip Roberts was taken ashore in custody, and on the following morning he appeared at the Police Court charged with being an accessory in overthrowing a convict clandestinely from Van Dieman's Land, and with being an accessory to the death of a convict.

That was hot news, even a hundred years ago. Reporters from most of the Melbourne newspapers were on the spot, and the *Port Phillip Patriot*, under the heading "Dominion Intelligence", sub-titled an account, "The Late Melancholy Case on Board the Shamrock". A wave of sympathy, unusual in that time and setting, spread from the coast itself to the whole southern aftermath. Even Syd-



ney sat up and took notice.

Sydney was definitely in Roberts' corner.

So did the *Port Phillip Patriot*.

The prisoner appeared deeply affected, sobbing bitterly throughout the examination and alternately kissing his two young children, by whom he was attended.

"He was remanded in order that

the depositions might be placed before the Crown Prosecutor for that officer to deal with as he might think proper. Prior to the discovery of the body, the poor fellow was observed to be in a dreadfully nervous and disordered condition."

After that, the story hung fire for a week, then a fortnight, while awaiting a report, officially awaited action by the Van Dieman's Land authorities. But weeks later, nothing had happened and Roberts' next appearance before the Police Court passed almost unnoticed. Freshman had gone from the story, it had become a mere matter of routine reporting.

But it was obvious that the Law did not intend to deal kindly with him. In proceedings that lasted only a few minutes, he was released on bond of £50 to answer any charge that might be preferred against him. If such a charge ever became a reality, the newspaper files are silent on the subject.

The odds are that he settled down with his two children in Port Phillip, his new life on the Australian mainland overshadowed by the memory of a body in a box.

The records aren't very helpful.



Death FOR A PENNY

Toliver was a careful man with money—except other people's. That juggling was his downfall.

By MORRIS COOPER

ILLUSTRATED BY DICK SEALY

ILLUSTRATION

MIKE TOLIVER still had the first penny he'd ever earned.

That had been when he was seven and the kid he had beaten up to get it was five. For a long time Mike had been afraid to spend it. But the beat-up little kid hadn't been sure who Mike was, and after a while Mike felt safe and secure with the penny hidden where no one would find it. When he had saved a few pennies and grown a little bolder, the penny became a sort of lucky piece.

By the time Mike was thirty he had lots of money. He liked the look and the feel of money, and he hated to spend any of it. He'd savings for houses over the price of something he wanted. Over the roll top desk in his office was a framed motto: *A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned.*

Mike Toliver was a miser. Not big time, because he was afraid to take too large a gamble; but enough money came in to make him happy.

The man who sat in his office now, seeing Mike, couldn't keep his eyes still. They rolled around in their sockets like spinning marbles, and Mike began to feel nervous himself.

"Quit your worrying," Mike said. "There ain't nothing to be afraid of here."

"The cops," said the man. "I want to be out of town before they find me."

Mike pulled a cigarette carefully, a

sheet of paper spread on his desk to catch any fallen tobacco crumbs. "So you'll bother you here." He laughed contentedly. "They got their cameras but they won't never pinched anything on me."

"Okay. Okay." The man started to crack his knuckles. "How much will you give me for the Gallagher diamond?"

Mike put the hand-rolled cigarette in his mouth and touched a match to it. "When will you bring the stuff?"

"I won't bring it. You'll have to come after it."

Mike Toliver inhaled deeply. "What's the smile? Figure maybe on

couching me for the dough and then doing a fast follow-out with the diamond?"

"No." The man stood up. "Can't you see I've got the jitters? I don't intend to go roving around this town again. As soon as you bring the money, I'm gone to beat it."

"I'll give you fifteen hundred for it," Mike said.

"Fifteen hundred?" The man looked at Mike. "It's worth a hundred grand."

Mike nodded his head. "On the open market, maybe. But TB have to keep it till it cashes off, and then have it cut up."

For a long time he squirmed, until finally his struggles stopped. Even then Mike did not let go of neck.



"You'll still get fifty grand out of the deal."

Mike nodded his head again, complacently. "And you'll have fifteen hundred for a fast getaway."

The man looked at Mike. He spoke slowly. "You're a cut."

"You can always go to somebody else and try to peddle that rock," Mike suggested.

There was a bitter edge to the little man's voice. "There's nobody else who would touch that stone right now, and you know it."

"You should have been more careful."

"But the star saw me. If I'd have left him alone, he'd have had the cops on my tail in an hour."

Mike dry-washed his chin. "So you left your prints instead. Smart boy."

The man started for the door. "I'm holding up at Barney's joint on River Street. The last door on the right, first floor."

"I know the place," said Mike. "I want the dough in small notes and no tricks."

"There won't be any. You know I wouldn't last long in this business if I ratified."

Mike called to him as he started to open the door. "You keep your mouth shut. I don't want anybody to know I'm mixed up in this. I'll see you around midnight."

Mike grimmed to himself when the door closed. It looked like the start of a very profitless bit of business.

The hallway was dark and noisy, but it wasn't the first time Mike had been in this particular house, and he walked over the threshold carpet without hesitation. When he came to the last door on the right, he paused and listened for a moment. Then he knocked softly.

A soft, strong sound came through the panel, and then a hoarse whisper: "Who is it?"

"Mike. Open up."

He heard the scrape of the bolt;

and then the door edged open. The man stepped aside to let Mike enter.

The thin light from an uncovered bulb threw a yellow glow over the cheaply furnished room and left deep shadows in the corners.

"Did you bring the dough?"

"Let's see the stone." Mike's voice was sullen. He brought out a wallet.

The man pulled a small wadded-up piece of newspaper from his pocket and opened it. Mike snatched it in his hands.

Even under the cheap light, the Gallagher diamond gleamed like a thing alive. He held out a hand.

"The rough test" snarled the man.

Mike handed over a sheet of notes. His eyes drank in the beauty of the stone while the little man counted the money.

"What's the idea?" the man demanded. He held the notes in his hand. "There's only a grand here."

Mike nodded. "I took a risk coming down here."

"We agreed on fifteen hundred."

"I changed my mind."

The man shoved the handful of money at Mike. "The deal is off. Give me back that rock."

"Don't be foolish," said Mike. "A good man takes you a long way."

"It was supposed to be fifteen hundred." The man was scathful. "Wait till the boys hear about this double-cross of yours. Your name'll be mud."

"You won't say anything."

"No?" The man stood squarely in front of Mike. "I'll yell till even the coppers can hear me."

Mike's hands closed furiously on the man's throat. For a long time he squeezed, until finally his strength slipped. Then, then, Mike did not let go at once.

When he did finally release his grasp, the body slipped to the floor. Mike made certain he was dead, and then he picked up the fallen money.

A man was standing on the sidewalk when Mike left Barney's house



"Sounds like a good approach...How did she react to it?"

He started, and then he saw that it was a blind beggar.

Mike walked over and stood in front of the blind man. He waved his hands suddenly in front of the man's eyes but there wasn't even a tiny flicker of motion. Shaken, Mike started to turn, when the beggar said, "Buy a pencil, money?"

Mike started to speak, changed his mind. Blind men generally had good eyes and he didn't want anyone remembering his voice. He fished around in his pocket and came up with a couple of pennies, which he dropped onto the cap. He hesitated a moment, then took a pencil. It would save him buying one next time.

Mike slept in his office that night. He was still half asleep when the knock came on his door.

Sergeant Alver walked into Mike's office.

Mike grinned at him. "Kind of early for a social call, isn't it?"

"This isn't a social call."

Mike sat at his desk and started to roll a cigarette.

"Shorty Ogle was killed last night."

"Yeah?" Mike struck a match.

"Strangled to death," Alver was poking around the office. "Where were you last night?"

Mike smiled. "What now?"

"Oh, my second reading."

"Here. Fast asleep."

Alver picked up Mike's coat and began unbuttoning the buttons on the desk. "What time did you go to sleep?"

"I can't say for certain." Mike inhaled deeply. "But I didn't leave this office after ten o'clock."

Alver looked at Mike. "We'll find the Gallagher diamond if it's here."

"So I'll take a rap for being a fence."

"We're not that simple," said Alver.

"Why not? And who says I got the rock?"

"I do." Alver felt around the desk. The searching fingers brushed a knick-

and a small drawer shot out.

Mike looked at him, and shrugged his shoulders. "You were lucky to find that drawer."

"Uh-huh. We've known about it for a long time. One of our stooges tapped us off."

Mike stood up. "Gonna you've got me this time?"

"Sit down," Alver said. "There's no hurry."

Mike sat down.

"When did you get this stone?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

Alver shook his head. "We've got Ramsey down at headquarters. He says Ogle showed it to him around eleven o'clock last night."

"He's nuts," said Mike.

"I don't think so."

Mike shut his mouth. "I won't say no more until I see my lawyer."

"Better get a good one."

Mike was silent.

"Ogle told Ramsey you were coming to buy this stone."

Mike laughed. "You can't believe everything you hear. Let's get this over with. I'll take a chance on a stolen goods rap."

"I'll be a murderer rap you'll have to beat."

Mike started to roll another cigarette. "My word's just as good as Ramsey's."

"We've got another witness. A blind man."

Mike looked up. "A blind man?" Sergeant Alver held up the long yellow pencil he had taken from Mike's coat. He pointed to some thin lettering. Mike read the words: Blind Sam.

"So what? I could've got that pencil last week or last month."

"No, Mike!" Alver put the pencil in his pocket, and pulled out a pair of cuffs. "Blind Sam not those pants about five years ago."

He clicked the cuffs on Mike's wrists. "Last night was the first time anybody ever took a pencil from him."

GENERAL FICTION

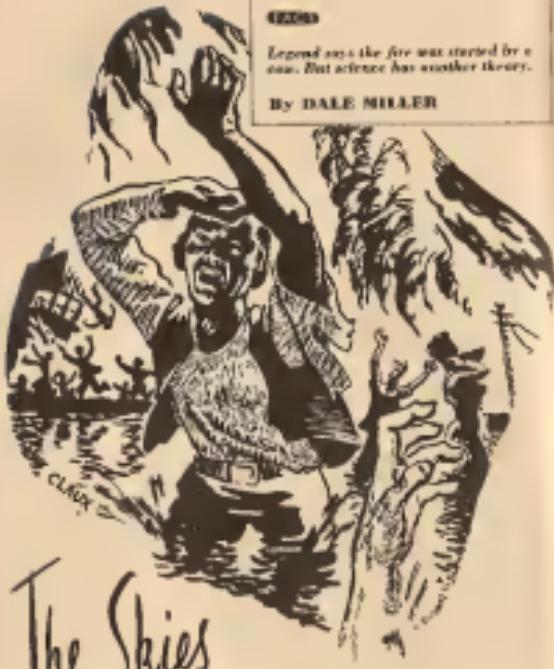


"This week: 'The Art of Sculpture' . . . the noisy keeps coming up!"

LEGEND

Legend says the fire was started by a cow. But science has another theory.

BY DALE MILLER



The Skies RAINED FIRE

THE Devons finally had only recently moved into their new home on Alexa Street. They were proud of it. They had no way of knowing it would be the funeral pyre in which all of them would die in agony.

Devon, his wife, and their two sons sat down to dinner that night of October 8, 1871. One of the boys remarked on the high wind that had sprung up suddenly, that blustered outside the wooden walls of the house and had the rafters cracking

"A good house, sure," Devon said. "It will take more than a high wind to shift her. We might lose a few shingles from the roof, but that's all."

Yes, the Devons were proud of their house. And the wind did not blow any shingles from the roof that night. Fire had something much worse in store for the unfortunate Devons.

Members of the family were half-way through their meal when they first heard the sound, an angry crackling sound, and then felt the blast of heat that simultaneously scorched their flesh and chilled their hearts. It was several moments before they realized that the roof of the house was on fire, and in those moments the walls flared into sudden flames.

Devon rushed to the door and tried to wrench it open, but already heat had twisted the frame and jammed the door so that there was no escape this way.

With the fear of death in her heart, Mrs. Devon did what many people have done in similar circumstances. She ran about the room, gathering in her arms household goods of little value compared with the fire she was watching.

The tempest used claws to smash the windows. With these broken, they sensed the mother and pitched her out one of these openings, and started to scramble after her.

But the Devon family had been snatched for death from the moment the first tongue of flame licked their shingled room. Their rush for safety was made too late. As if caught in a blast from hell, the house blazed and fell in a fury heap, and the swift roar of flames overrode the screams of the doomed people.

The Devons were but four of the

two hundred and fifty people who died in Chicago that night of the great fire, their home but one of the hundreds that suddenly and for no reason burst into flames, one of the thousands burned to the ground as the fire spread.

The legend of that night of holocaust has laid the blame at the foot of Mrs. Patrick O'Leary's cow, who is supposed to have kicked over a lantern while the good lady was milking her.

Truth as that the cow seems to have had little to do with the great fire that burned Chicago.

Consider the account of the night, written by a Chicago dramatist after the fire had wiped out a city, killed two hundred and fifty people, left one hundred thousand homeless, and caused seventy million pounds worth of damage.

"The first thing we knew that night, an alarm came in that O'Leary's barn was burning. That fire was soon under control. The next thing they came and told us that St. Paul's Church, about two squares north, was on fire. We checked that out, and then the next thing we knew the fire was at Barbican's planing mill. The thing just went on from there. Fire started and grew all over the city. Chicago was a city built mostly of wood, and it burned like tinder that October night of '71."

That is the beginning of the end of the legend, quite apart from the natural question of what was Mrs. O'Leary doing, milking a cow by lantern light? The story does completely忘了 what it is reported that the same night there were fires over seven of America's mid-western states, in some twenty towns and villages besides the city of Chicago. Illinois.

Because these communities were

still, the damage to property was less than in the more publicized Chicago fire, but the loss of human life at Peshtigo, Wisconsin, far exceeded, made the former affair seem like a cakewalk-by-harbor. Over four hundred as many people were lost in the flames that destroyed Peshtigo as were lost in the city fire of the same night.

October 8 fell on a Sunday that year. Most of the two thousand citizens of Peshtigo were in their three hundred and fifty houses when the town caught fire. There had been a strange sky-glow during late afternoon. Then a sound like thunder was heard.

Next were out-of-town explosions of gas rising from the swamps around the town, and then the forests caught fire and the flames ran through the pines and, propelled by a fierce gale, engulfed the town. Houses exploded in flames. The inhabitants of Peshtigo ran for their lives, but less than a thousand of them won the race with death.

Those who had come through the fire blast of heat ran for the river bordering the town. The very air they breathed was scalded, lungs seared on fire, and many fell and died of suffocation or of lung collapse.

Precious, making futile attempts to fight the fire, found their horses falling to ash in their hands, while water in the tanks turned to steam and the horses were killed, the fire raged on burned to incinerate. Few of those gallant men survived.

The river was filled with people, many of them badly burned but standing upright, many of them floundering dead in the water. Those who had fled from both sides of town to what they believed was the safety of a wooden bridge across the river found that the bridge turned to ashes

lying under their feet, dropping the struggling mass of humanity to the water below.

A crowd of refugees sheltering in a large brick building were at books in a hole, only that flesh cannot stand such a degree of heat as they were exposed to.

That was Peshtigo, Wisconsin, on the night of the Chicago fire. When dawn came the heat had faded enough to allow the survivors to come out from their places of refuge. Eleven hundred and fifty of the town's two thousand were dead, and the town no longer existed. All that remained was an expanse of black wasteland.

And this scene, in greater or lesser detail, was being more than duplicated in other parts of the American mid-west.

Forest fires swept across the entirety of the state of Michigan. Two of the state's largest towns suffered great damage and loss of life. The lumber centre of Menominee was wiped out. The town of Holland was two-thirds destroyed and two hundred farms around the town reduced to bare burnt-over earth.

Because of the wide spread of the fires over the state of Michigan, an exact estimate of the loss has not been compiled, but the dead were up in the hundreds. Stretches of forest and of open country amounting to thousands of square miles were left bare, and many thousands of people were homeless.

In the state of Minnesota there were fifty dead, and again large tracts laid waste. Indians suffered no loss of life, but considerable damage to their forests and plains. Forest fires swept the Dakota. Sections of Iowa burned off if a gigantic blowtorch had scoured them.

The unnameable speed of these fires



coming to seven states on the evening of the same day as the Chicago fire, gave the direct lie to the O'Leary's barn legend. No one now could have started, no one long could have caused such widespread devastation.

The real cause remains at the many unsolved riddles of the world of ours. But there is one theory to explain it, and this seems the most possible and likely solution to the problem.

If the theory is correct, then the houses really did run fire that fatal day.

Twenty-five years earlier a comet, named after its discoverer, Biela, had passed close to earth and had split an encircling earth's gravitational force. This comet, expected to reappear around the year 1882, had failed to do so. It did appear late in 1872, after the fire but it was noted that the tail of the comet was missing.

One suggestion is that the gaseous tail was drifting through space and that the mid-western American section of earth was close enough to it to be affected, on the night of October 8, 1871.

Some men of science held other similar ideas. In a summary of possible causes, a newspaper of the time stated, "We have the statement of astronomers that there has been an explosion in the sun, and that several comets are in danger of losing their tails by their proximity to that orb."

So that whether from Biela's comet or some other, the consensus of scientific opinion was that the part of the earth's surface had come particularly close to such a gaseous tail. Spontaneous combustion from a mixture of gases had followed.

The point in favor of this theory is that wherever the fire struck there

were eyewitness reports of buildings suddenly exploding from within and then bursting into flames.

No ordinary degree of fire could have, as most of these did, melted huge blocks of building stone, showed blue and green colors as well as fire-red, or burned back against the side that should have blown it in the opposite direction.

No ordinary fire would have killed the Pelegton man who was later found, his clothes white and his body unsoaked with water in his pockets fused out of shape.

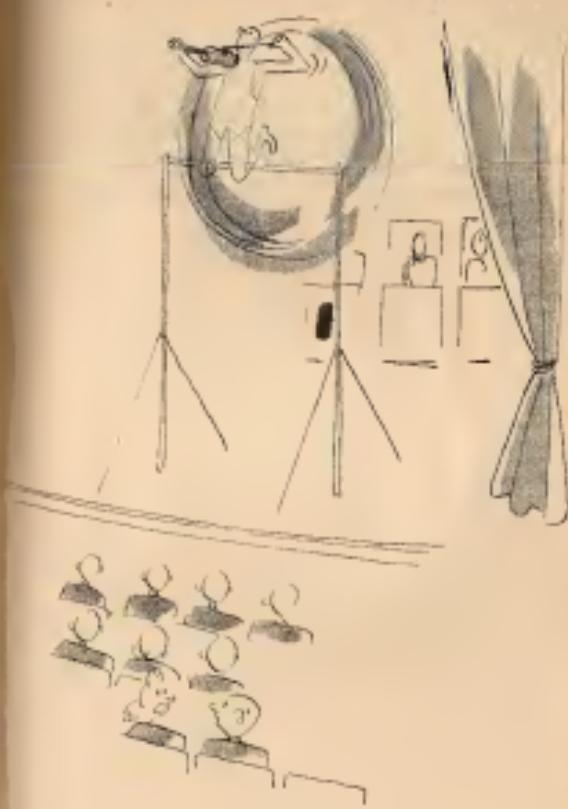
And what kind of fire would have, as happened in Chicago, melted into a solid mass the several hundred tons of pig-iron ingots piled on the bank of the river, several hundred yards from the nearest buildings?

On the Great Lakes that night steamer passengers saw islands up to a mile from the nearest shore suddenly run to flame. At Pelegton a house was taken by the wind and lifted high into the air where it caught fire and fell, blazing.

In view of these facts, the comet-tail theory seems the most probable one. This being the case, the holocaust might as easily have occurred at any other portion of the earth's surface, might as easily recur at some future time. The chances against this are large enough to be Considering, but they are chances.

Earth is a body in free space where other bodies move. And these other bodies sometimes go off the track. The amazing fact that the tail of a comet brushed an entire region of the American continent one night and that region upwards of two thousand miles, and caused the destruction of a great city, many towns, numerous villages and settlements.

October 8, 1871, was a bad night for some of the people on this planet.



"Do you suppose he plays roulette?"

SLAY 'EM

with these



where

Lady's Hat: Headwear with elaborate trimmings.

Woman like a strong and silent man, they think he's lame.

Faking it: A situation entirely surrounded by lies in old clothes.

Communist: One who assumes every time Stalin likes snafu.

The mass exerts a great influence over both the fad and the nation.

Top Hover charge

A man should be master in his own home or know the reason why. Men and men usually know the reason why.

There are two periods in a man's life when he doesn't understand a woman—before marriage and after marriage.

Happiness is like your shadow, you can't get nearer by chasing it.

Speculating: The art of being dumb in all subjects but one.

There was the old maid who considered that Leap Year was the time to make the bachelors skip.

Men still die with their boots on but they're usually on the accelerator.

Many people live alone and like it but most of them live alone and look it.

The most thing about adams is that it needn't be taken.

Love conquers all things except poverty and the toothache.

Saying is dead. Thousands attend its funeral nightly.

An intelligence officer is a man with a node in his head.

As long as a woman can look ten years younger than her daughter she is perfectly satisfied.

DEVIL DOONE ADVENTURE



"The WALL OF DEATH"

The Adventures of

DEVIL DOONE

By R. Goldson

Gold.

The Wall of death

DRAWN
by

H. J.
HORN

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL TRIP DOONE'S HUNTED LAUNCH MAKES BACK FOR PORT INHEN



SHE ENGINE SPLUTTERS AND BREAKS DOWN COMPLETELY...



NIGHT FALLS AS THE MEN WORK ON THE SHARKE'D ENGINE. THEN FROM OUT OF THE GLOOM APPEARS ANOTHER CRAFT... BLACKED OUT AND MYSTERIOUS



HOURS LATER, THE SKIPPER GETS THE ENGINE GOING AND THE LAUNCH LIMPS INTO PORT. THE MYSTERY OF THE OTHER LAUNCH IS STILL UNAVOIDED



PUZZLING AT THE MYSTERY-CRAFT'S REFUSAL TO OFFER HELP, DEVIL VOLVED THE ONLY EXPLANATION:



AS SUDDENLY AS IT CAME, THE STRANGE LAUNCH SLEEPS OFF WITH OUT EVEN OFFERING TO HELP

COME BACK... SHE'S GONE! AND THEY DIDN'T EVEN TELL US IT'S NICE FRIENDLY FOLK!



"THERE WAS NO REASON FOR IT TO GHEE OFF LIKE THAT," SAYS DOONE. NEXT MORNING, DID YOU RECOGNIZE HER?"

"COULD'VE BEEN ANYONE, DEV. IT WAS TOO DARK TO SEE MUCH. HERE'S LUCK, ANYWAY!"



LATER, STROLLING ON THE BEACH DOONE SEES SOMETHING... VERY EASY TO LOOK AT!



DEVIL'S TECHNIQUE DISRESPECTS WITH THE
FORMALITIES AS THE GIRL PREPARES TO
LEAVE THE BEACH... AND SO MADELINE
LONG HIBERT... A SATANIC CHARACTER!

ALLOW ME
... PLEASE!



RETURNING TO THE HOTEL, DOUGIE
LEARNED THAT MADELINE IS SECRETARY
TO MRS. STANDISH, A RICH OLD LADY
IN PORT SHELDON FOR HER HURVES

SEE YOU IN THE LOUNGE IN ABOUT
THIRTY MINUTES
TILL SIX
LATER,



SOON, IN THE LOUNGE... I'M WORRIED,
DEVIL. IT'S NEARLY NOON AND MRS.
STANDISH IS STILL ASLEEP... IT'S NOT
LIKE HER TO SLEEP SO LATE!

MAYBE IT'S JUST... HALLO,
HERE COMES
THE MAID!



THE OLD LADY LIES IN HER BED, WHITE,
MOTIONLESS... AND FRIGHTENING!



MISS LONG, THE MAID CANNOT AWAKEN
MRS. STANDISH! COULD YOU PLEASE
COME UPSTAIRS AT ONCE?



DOUGIE MAKES A SWIFT EXAMINATION
... AND KNOWS THE WORST!



TELL ME, MISS LONG... DO YOU KNOW
WHY SHE OVERDOSED THE TABLETS? DID
SHE USE A DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION OR
DO SHE HAVE... SOME OTHER
SUPPLY SOURCE?



NO, EXCEPT THAT SHE GLUTTERED EARLY
FROM MORNING THAT WAY SINCE SHE
HAD THOSE TABLETS.



MADELINE SAYS THAT MRS. STANDISH
HAD GOT A DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION AT
FIRST, BUT AFTERWARDS THE DOCTOR
HAD REVOKED IT.

... SINCE WHICH
SHED BEEN GETTING THEM WITHOUT A
PRESCRIPTION FROM A SMALL
CHEMIST IN THE TOWNSHIP
NOMORE, I THINK IT WAS.



Dougie reads on: "IT'S THERE AN ILLEGAL
TRAFFIC IN DANGEROUS DRUGS?"
THREE PEOPLE HAVE NOW DIED FROM
DRUGS WHICH THEY OBTAINED WITHOUT
A DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION....

HEARNE, IN A DOCKSIDE DACK ROOM... "I TELL YOU WE CAN'T TAKE SHIPMENT OF THE NEXT LOT, HARRIS! THE DEATH OF THAT OLD WOMAN STRIDED UP A FEW OF TROUBLE!" CAPTAIN SHAWH "BRIDES... BOONE'S ABOUT, TOO!"



GRAY, BOSS... BUT BOONE AND ROGUE WILL HAVE TO SHIP. ROGUE KNOWS TOO MUCH AND THAT BOONE GUY COULD STICK ANYTHING!



SHADE OF HIS DOOM, CHEMIST BOONIE SLEEPS SOUNDLY AT THE BACK OF HIS SHOP.



HARRIS'S INSTRUCTIONS LEAVE NO ROOM FOR FURTHER ARGUMENT.



HARRIS ANSWERS THAT BOONE AND THE LITTLE CHEMIST ARE TOO DANGEROUS TO GO ON LIVING. HE CHUCKLES....



AND PAUSED SHUTTLING... AND CROSSED INTO THE LONGEST SLEEP OF ALL!



BOONE'S BODY IS HUNGLED DOWN TO NEAL, THE TRAPDOOR, AT NEAR...



IN HIS ELEMENT, DOING JITTER HAND AND SPIN... THE FENCE BECOMES ATTACK.



SET SHADY FRIMMIE ON TABLE IN TILLS DOOR, TAKT, IN VIEW OF HARRIS'S PROXIMITY AND THE ATTACK ON BOONE. HARMONY, THE GANG REBEL, WAS SHOT AT OR PEGGED.

THE DRUGS HEART... FORT SHELTON...

GONE IN MY LAUNCH, FRIMMIE. IT'S MY SIGHT THAT THAT CRAFT WE MET THE NIGHT WE BROKE DOWN HUNTER'S RAIL WAITING-BORNE DALLA CONTACT AND MEDICAL. OUR LAUNCH FOR IT.



... WHILE REVENGEING AN EVENING SKILL BY THE REARFOOT, HAS BEEN SET OFF BY MORE OF HARRIS'S GAMING.



... AND THE SWARDED KILLERS BEAT A DISGRANDING RETREAT IN AWAITING DAY.



FRIMMIE, AGAIN DDEVIL, TO FURY ALONE, HANDED AGAINST THE GUNBLADES.

IF WE CUFF'EM NOT WITH COPS, ITLL SHOW OUTWARDLY IT'S A ONE-MAN JOB, AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I KNOW WHO COULD HANDLE IT.



SHOAL AND HAMBERS PUT OUT TO SEA IN SHOAL'S LAUNCH, ON YET ANOTHER DRUG RUN... THIS MUST BE THE LAST JOB FROM POKE WHEELER, SHOAL. WE CAN'T RIDE IT FROM NOW ON—WELL HAVE TO FIND A BASE FURTHER NORTH.



AT A CERTAIN TIME AND PLACE, THE MYSTERY LAUNCH APPEARS AGAIN AND MOVING UP TO CAPTAIN SHOAL'S CLIFF

HURRY IT UP, YOU LUMBERS! I WANTA GET THIS JOB OVER!



DOOMIE AND MADELINE WATCH THE BASICALLY CAPTAIN'S LAUNCH RETURN FROM ITS MIDNIGHT REDEYEZO.

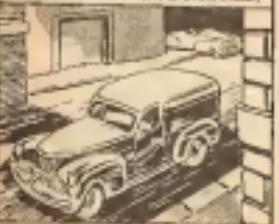
THAT'S HIS LAUNCH ALL RIGHT, MADELINE! THE DRUGS MUST BE ABOARD NOW!



DOOMIE IS RIGHT—UNIVERSAL, THEY WAITED THE BOAT DOCK AND ITS CARGO LOADED SWIFTLY INTO A WAITING VAN



HAMBERS AND SHOAL DRIVE OFF, LITTLE ENDING THAT DEVIL'S BIG CAR IS FOLLOWING AT A SAFE DISTANCE,



ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWN THE VAN TURNS SUDDENLY OFF THE ROAD AND JOINS THE TENTS AND CARAVANS OF A TRAVELLING CIRCUS



SO... A CIRCUS AS THE DISTRIBUTING AGENT? NOT A BAD IDEA, MADELINE!

"Hey! I've barked my shin again!"



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WITH A PEDIGREE

Sovereign Hats...
fit for a King

ANOTHER EXCLUSIVE TOP DOG PRODUCT

THE LION'S GROWL DURING THE OTHERS FROM THE CARAVAN AS DOOGIE STANES MENACED BY THE SHARLING BEAST. IT LOOKS AS IF THE GAME IS UP!



I HAVE AN EXCELLENT WAY OF DISPOSING OF YOU, MY HOLLOW FRIEND! YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE WALL OF DEATH, NO? MARCH!



FORCED INTO THE CIRCULAR PIT DOOGIE HAS ONLY SECONDS IN WHICH TO ACT. HE SEES A SPEED-BIKE LEFT FROM A PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE



YOU ARE UNLUCKY TONIGHT MR DOOGIE. FOR YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE IN PLACE ALIVE!



DOOGIE IS ESCORTED TO A BIG MARQUEE ENCLOSING A HIGH CYLINDRICAL PIT. A VIDEOMAN ATTRACTION USED BY A TRAM OF TRICK MOTOR-CYCLES.



WITH A ROAR, THE LION BOUNDS INTO THE PIT, BUT DOOGIE, KICKING THE MOTOR-CYCLE INTO FULL-THROATED LIFE, HAS ALREADY STARTED A SIZZLY CRUISE ROUND THE "WALL OF DEATH!"



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Adelaide.



SO I'LL GET THAT
CAR OUT O' THAT PIE,
LION-MAN... AND
NO FUNNY STUFF OR
YOU REMIND IT, SIR?

AH... BUT
YES PLEASE!
I DO AS
YOU SAY!



RICE GOING,
KID! LET'S HAVE A
DATE WITH A DRINK!

WELL, I'VE
JUST MET
A LION,
DEVIL, SO I
MAY JUST BE WELL
KIND UP WITH A WOLF!

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ER 344

MAN

on the rimrock

By GIFF CHESHIRE

Mace had a job to do: to save a hundred immigrants from death on the Oregon trail.

AT this hour the floating sun seamed a hell rotting on the clamorously rotted plane of the rimrock against a copper sky. Because he was watching it, Mace Goodnight chanced to draw the man up there. He rode half a length behind Lovelace and the girl. When he gently lifted the rifle from his saddle belt, the man saluted from behind a small rock and bound-

ed toward the sharp break directly above him.

There was small protection on the high bluffs-tops up there, and it was the show of peace that deceived Mace. He was a dead shot. Lifting the rifle, he aimed and fired. The man sprawled out flat on the talus and did not rise.

Lovelace's name means, for he was a riding troubadour, named in mad-

please. The three horses shivered nervously on the flat below the rim. Mace peeped his mount toward the foot of the talus, leaped down and started climbing. He had dropped the rifle and it was in his hand. Repeating a shot from above, he took what cover he could. There was no shot. He reached the top and now he had put in a hasty one. There was a swelled, bloody hole in the back of the man's matted head.

Mace lifted him and, half sliding, carried him down to the flat. Lovelace and Nancy Marlow had swung down, and in the distance Mace could see the living dust of the emigrant train. There was a look of horror on the girl's face, and Val Lovelace stared at Mace with surprise and

"You vicious, cold-blooded beast!"
Nancy cried, in a horrified voice.

sheer speculation mixed in his deep brown eyes.

"Why, you shot him in cold blood!" Nancy shrieked.

Mace had left the dead man on the sandy earth, and now he looked at him closely. The stiff face was stern and unbroken. The glazed eyes were too glassy, and it was a predator's smile. A man off the back trails, who had been spying on them. Mace swung his attention to the garnet still slanted across Lovelace's broad chest. Sometimes Lovelace rode with it, stroking and staring at his rich harness, and sometimes not.

"A white man with decent intentions wouldn't gather behind a rock to watch us pass."

"You didn't even give him a chance to fight back!" Nancy raged. "Do you enjoy cold-blooded killing?"

Mace let out a breath that was



almost a sigh. "McMae, he was trying to get away. In ten seconds more he would've made it. He didn't want a fight. He didn't dare to be seen, but when he was he had important business that told him to fight his shack. McMae, he's an outlaw, and your father's talked ice much."

"Heresy!" snapped Lovelace. "A shaggy, vicious attempt to impress Nancy!"

"Mobile you better save your voice for your pretty singing," said Mae. It was a moment of deadly irritation. "That's what you bought it along for, wasn't it?" That half is he in. The instrument was light in colour, and would have been plainly visible from the rim. It could have spoken volumes to this dead man. Mae had gambled everything and killed the man because he believed it had.

For an instant Val Lovelace hung in indecision, dark thoughts working behind the mask of his deceptively amiable eyes. He was nearly as tall as Mae and a little broader. He had a soft-spoken, elusive harshness, a wealth of soft wavy brown hair always slightly combed so that its headstrong days were best displayed. He gave Mae a sharp appraising and, turning, helped Nancy to mount. He owing on to his own horse, and they left toward the wagons at a stretched-out pace.

With no audience, Mae let out a real laugh. He had learned to hate killing in the war, but there were times when it was a necessity. For several days now the original trail, so clearly discerned by the porous Vincent Harlow, had been following the Central Oregon Emigrant Trail, across the endless rolling desert. It was pointed now toward deeply gorged Crooked River and Barney Prince's new settlement a day's travel beyond, before the swing across the new route over the high Cascade range.

A man driven by vanity, Vincent

Harlow had warned Mae ever since he joined the town east of Grand Island. His clothes and expensive outfit proclaimed him for a rich man, and his laconic talk made it doubly certain that nobody guessed the fact. In evening songs or small talk on the trail, he liked to term himself a capitalist. The Oregon Country needed a man of his cut, he implied. This with the innovative way he displayed his ample funds told any thinking man that he carried considerable wealth with him.

Twice Mae Goodright had spoken a warning, and twice had been put in his place with a heavy smile. That alone had bothered Mae still. It was Val Lovelace who had lost the situation urgency.

It was a strange thing for a man to undergo twice to the far West. Mae believed that Lovelace did not recall their other meeting at the relatives' when Mae had been roamed in Nebraska territory since the war. Being a man who rarely forgot the features and manner and small eccentricities of another, he was certain he had seen Lovelace with another party the season before. It was conceivable that a man could find reason for returning east then heading out again, but Lovelace surely insisted that it was his first time out.

Not until he had spotted the man, new deal, hidden lurch on the moccasin had Mae seen through it with compelling clarity. He recalled now that Lovelace had swivelled in the saddle, making the guitar clearly visible in the sun, turning back again a few seconds before Mae had fired his rifle. Mae knew it had been a signal. The charming, inviolate Lovelace was making it a practice to attach himself to trains in which he selected plunder.

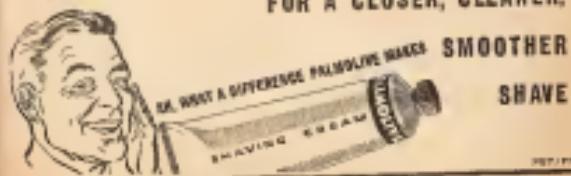
He had outriders posted in wild reaches such as this, and his patter-playing in the saddle had been his means of identifying himself to them

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5. . . . and it's very economical.



and conveying the information that the train was ripe for their pocket, that he would be waiting for them and claim his part.

Moss remained cool, from the added elevation, now that the wagons were drawing nearer. He would have to borrow a shovel from one of the framers on the train and bury the dead guy. At this advanced stage of western civilization, tools were well established, and no grades were required. It was like Vincent Harlow to have more capable men than him than captains. If he minded as his daughter had, see Moss Goodnight was going to be in an uncomfortable position.

Moss rode in most the slow-moving trains, for the first time questioning the wisdom of his decision to move west. Yet he was an unusually restless nature, and he was no stranger to the position. When he was fifteen he had lost both the parents by a single epidemic. For many years his Uncle John Goodnight had tramped in the Rockies, from the headwaters of the Missouri down to Santa Fe. Through the industry had been developing rapidly since the early forties John had kept on because he knew no other trade.

He had taken his nephew, and Moss Goodnight had grown up to the ways of the wilderness and frontier. Then had come the war between the states and Moss, a tinsmith, had enlisted in the Union Army. When he returned, he had found that John Goodnight was dead. Moss had carried out at the trail, then, and for three years had run a miffing station for the thousands of wagons on the Overland. He had prospered, but nevertheless had given in his spade and gotten an unexpected chance to sell out, he had accepted and joined the next passenger train for Oregon. It had been this one.

Three men rode out ahead of the train and as they approached, Moss

saw it was Lovelace again, with Vincent Harlow and Colby Tracy, a deer and silent former. He saw from his manner that Harlow was excited. Tracy rolled a cigarette and waited, annoyed turning him quickly.

"What's this, Goodnight?" Harlow shouted, as they rode up. "What this I hear about you shooting some man?"

"You mean to have it clear enough?" snapped Moss. "I shot a man."

"But why? Just because some fellow happens to look at you, you kill him? An outright criminal act, sir, and I won't tolerate it in my train."

"What do you think I do?" asked Moss, letting cigarette smoke drift out of his mouth with the words.

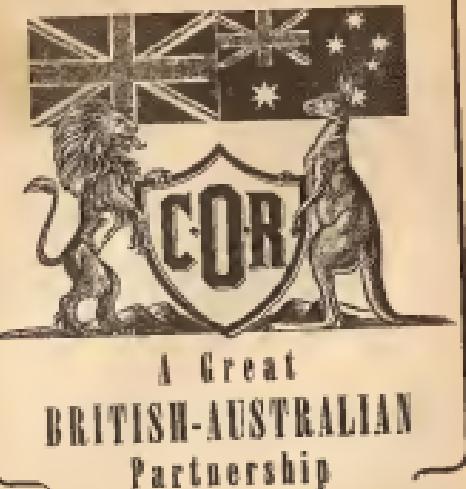
"We're going to try you and we're going to shoot you, Goodnight," said Val Lovelace.

Moss shuddered. "I'm being tortured now because of the likes of you, Vincent Harlow," he said slowly. "You show-off fool, you're in danger. From your smooth pal, there, Val Lovelace. And the man I killed isn't the only one he's got up powder. They'll be watching your outfit close now. Somewhere Lovelace'll get his message across. If you want to play honest, Harlow, that's where you ought to start."

Moss turned his horse dismally and rode on toward the train. He got a shovel and returned to the dead man and buried him as the forty-wagon train pulled past. From the census sheet he knew that the news had spread throughout the length, though suddenly turned off the trail toward where Moss worked.

Moss finished the distasteful job and let the train pass for shade. A reasonable man would pull out right now, he told himself.

If he stayed he would have to kill Val Lovelace, he figured by him as whether a probable outlaw attack. His convictions in that regard were only heightened. It was not Nancy



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REMEMBER IT IS DRIVING IN GOOD MOTORING

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OR COR AGENT
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"I love everything
that's old—old friends,
old times, old manners,
old books, old wine."

—Grahame

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Marlow, who even yet could not see his heart possessed, that obstructed its vision. There were a hundred people in the train beside the Marlowes, who would become the innocent victims of an attack. Doggedly Mass moved on and turned after the train.

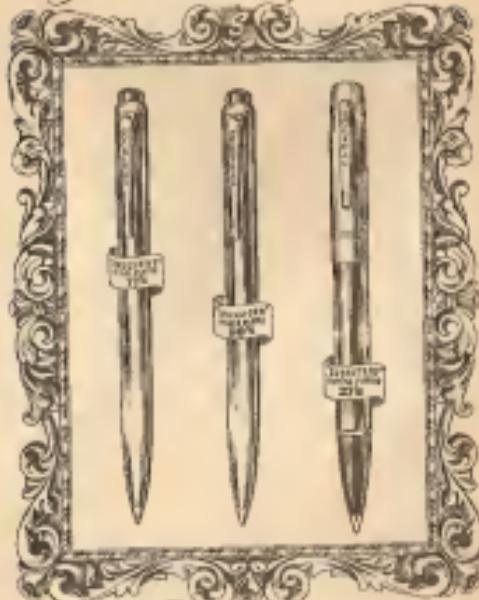
More dallyed behind the train for the rest of the afternoon, making his plans. He did not propose to leave Lovelace with the Indians, but out of no way of saving it from him. Lovelace's outlaw crew would stay under cover until the sun rose from him. The man would appear wholly benighted, falsely accused, until he felt the moment was right again. And it would be dead easy, for it was plain that Vincent Marlow trusted the man implicitly.

Yet Mass felt there was a hope that by moving quietly he could get a few of the more resolute men in the group to listen to him, and be persuaded to be on guard.

Marlow had halted the train at a point where the trail touched and crossed a creek. When Mass rode in, the men were unstrapping horses and mares, with women and children busily unpacking camping equipment. He felt their hostility instantly. Mass lowered his pack horses and led them boldly through the camp. He selected a site a few hundred yards above the uppermost wagon for his own camp.

By the time he had staked and eaten his supper and cleaned up afterward, night had come on. If Lovelace hoped to drum up a mock trial and hangings, no move was made in that direction. Mass watched the sleeping stars in wonder though. This terrain was like as much of the rest, open and rolling, broken frequently by crag rock out-springs. A warm, sweet breeze rippled across the sun and shadows. There was one camp beyond the creek about a mile away. It struck him that Val Lovelace had probably suggested this camp site.

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He grew aware of footsteps and straightened up, head on the grip of his gun. He saw then that it was Nancy Harlow, moving through the night toward his fire. He had intended, once the women and youngsters were in bed, to call a few plodded men beyond number and talk to them. He hadn't included Nancy in the group.

She stepped into the firelight and moved beyond him before she stopped. Then she turned. She kept her voice low. "Mae, father told me what you said about Val Lovelace. I know my father is far too much of a show-off and—well, I'd like to hear what you have that opposes 'em."

He let his gaze stray over her slim body, then he lifted his eyes to meet hers. "In the first place, the man has whom he charms he's never been out here before. I saw him last year," he said.

"There is no second, Goodnight!" a sharp voice said, behind him. "We figured you'd be dangerous to take, falls! Unshoddy that gun belt and drop it and turn around!" It was Val Lovelace.

The glow of triumph in Nancy Harlow's eyes told Mae she had let herself be trapped like a fool. Interspersed by a woman's charms, while Val Lovelace had snuck up behind him. He recalled now how she had stopped past him, so as to turn his back toward the room again. His talk had covered Lovelace's steps as he came the short distance from the closest wagon, behind Mae's back.

She deserved the advantage. Mae took of her now. Inexplicably, she had just moved, and the three of them were on a line. In this position, Lovelace could not fire at Mae without endangering her. Aware of this, Mae spun, shouting himself mad as he had slapped at his gun.

Though thrown off stride, Lovelace was deadly aim. He waited till Mae was out of line with Nancy, then

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"GILBEY'S
PLEASE"



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fully appreciate its importance. To reach
this end, the speaker would suggest
that they frequent their local
paper and some of the more
important publications. The
Speaker further suggests that you
call the speaker in his office.

STENO NO MONEY!

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ANSWER:

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feed, and Maxi put an echo so close to the shot that the two seemed one. It was Val Lawrence who bent sleepily, reached, then pushed to the ground.

"You woman, cold-blooded beast!"

"He's not dead, mother, but he has been a stone billy for a few weeks at the least." Mac stopped formulating quickly and pulled up the gun. Lovelace had stopped.

"Blood red" said Nancy, an an out-poor of Beresford. "I lost myself in this so as not to endanger the camp. If you must have human blood to be born, well we must!"

"Nancy, shut your pretty mouth," said Max. He did not like swearing either, but it had been unavoidable.
"Step back down the line, Nancy. I'm going to prove once and for all what kind of birds you've all been."

She obeyed and he saw at a glance that she was genuinely tormented of him. Men had come running, and now they joined a circle around Mac and the girl. Mac told their anxiety and his own indecision. He knew that pleading would accomplish nothing. He had to demonstrate, to hold up a big play on what was only a powerful punch. If he was wrong had been wrong all along. He shuddered. Years before he had learned that a man on the frontier had to rely on his instinct, which so often told him more than his outward reason.

The press picked up Vincent Harlow and quoted him. The man had been shaken by the development, and much of the bluster was gone from him.

"Hail!" Mac called, "and to Lovelace's suggestion you make simple answer."

"Why, yes. Why not? It's a good place."

Men ignored her after that, turning his attention to men more like himself, though there was no lack of women.



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the ways of the World. "What I did this afternoon I had to do. What I did tonight, I had to do, too. The rest of Lovelace's men're on that roof yonder watching that camp. When it's a-sing they'll hit it, shoot it up some, and try to get Sharlow's money. That is, they will if they get the signal from Lovelace. I'm going to give 'em that signal."

"If you're right," blurted Sharlow, "why should we make attack?"

"Bear 'em out, Sharlow!" a man responded. "That bimbo he killed this afternoon! warned me. In this country a white don't spy on a white unless he wants to get shot at. I got a wife and kids in this country. You been shooting off your big mouth ever since the Bar Muddy. That Lovelace never did look right to me. Skippy, hand it. What you got in mind, Goodnight?"

"I'm going to take Lovelace's horse and guitar and hat and ride over there. I want Vincent Marlow to go with me. And I want the rest of you men to keep on your toes here in case something slips."

Marlow's bluster returned. "I'll go with you. But it's an idiotic idea."

Fifteen minutes later the pair forded the creek and splashed up on the far side. Rolling暮 plain lay between them and the rim, and the obscured moon scarcely cast a shadow. Max Goodnight had never shown Nancy Sharlow, but he was somewhat niggly on a guitar, himself. He rode with it slung under some his chest as had been Lovelace's habit. His fingers silently strumming the strings. He had left an alerted camp behind, with Val Lovelace under guard.

Though he felt responsible for Vincent Sharlow, his anger against the man was a cold thing. Sharlow had a lesson to learn, if he was to survive in this country.

They came in under the rising moonlight, riding its length, then back again, and as they travelled

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Moore plucked out the two Lovelaces had been playing that afternoon. He knew that they had been seen and he hoped they would think he was Lovelace.

They rode back to their starting point at the base of the rim, and Moore saw that Herliss had stuck down in the saddle. It gave him great amusement. He wheeled his horse as riders came through the darkness, where a long dirtier slope led down from a small break in the rim. He dropped the guitar to the ground, whispered, "Ready?" and pulled his gun.

He let them reach the flat, a hundred yards to the left, where they drew into more distinct shapes. When a soft voice called, "That you, Val?" he lifted his gun, and fired.

Somebody cried, "Well, it's a trap" and followed it with an explosive curse of frustration. Moore's first shot lifted a man out of saddle, and the riderless horse cast across the open. There were three more shapes, and more than Moore had figured on. Lead was whirling around them suddenly, gunpowder exploding in the darkness. He emptied another saddle in the next second in which Lovelace's hot left hand had hit.

He saw to his surprise that Harlow had cooled into the fight and was shooting, though probably with little effect.

The two remaining riders charged them then, guns blazing a patchwork of red streaks in the night. Moore's own feeling was one of surprise rather than pain, when he left the saddle, leading shoulder first in the dirt as horses passed over him. Many a horse spill had taught him the trick of landing firmly, and he scrambled immediately to his feet. Harlow was standing in the stirrups now, an open target, but shooting like mad. A rider threw up his arms and pitched from his horse. Moore packed off the other.

All but one of them were dead, and that one was badly hit. Even under Moore's threatening gun this last one waited that the last blow the size of the wild bronch. Daring and boldless, he whistled in Herliss's hearing that Val Lovelace had been their leader. They brought the man back to camp to spread beside the still unconscious Lovelace.

In the freight, Moore saw for the first time that blood was running down the side of Vincent Harlow's head. His own left shoulder was paralyzed, and there was work for the skilled fingers of one of the women.

Yet mutual attention seemed to be the farthest thing from Harlow's thoughts. He let a thoughtful gaze travel around the group of watchers and finally settle on Moore Goodright.

"I played the fool," he said finally. Moore liked a man who could admit that. "The funny thing is I'm not nearly the biggest I like to make out. A show-off. Probably some of you others have more with you to shoot in outlaw men than I have. And it seems that Val Lovelace played the fool, too. I apologize to you people. I endangered you without realizing it. I hope you can forgive me."

Moore then turned than toward the woman who was waiting with a pan of hot water and bandages. It was Nancy Herliss, and her face was grave. He stripped off his shirt and gritted his teeth while she did the chores. It was an expert job. When it was finished, she looked up at him.

"Moore, he's not the only one. I'm terribly ashamed. I hope you'll take this train on through, and not think too hard of us."

He grunted at her. "Nancy, I don't plan to go no more thinking about it. I've got some music to make to you on Lovelace's guitar, if it didn't get smashed up. I've got some real talking to do, and that's the way to do it."

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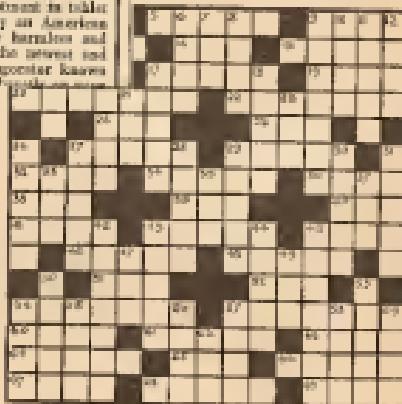
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